FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS EDITION

PERRAMUS

THE CITY AND OBLIVION

DRAWN BY **Alberto Breccia**

WRITTEN BY **Juan Sasturain**

ALBERTO BRECCIA

PERRAMUS

THE CITY AND OBLIVION

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FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

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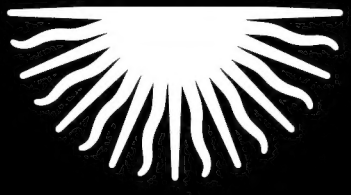
YES or YES

Publication History

Although its creators are Argentine/Uruguayan—and indeed, the very nature of this graphic novel is an exploration of how Argentina expresses its national culture, through soccer, tango, and literature—*Perramus* (1982–1989) was initially a serial intended for European magazines. Sasturain and Breccia began work on it in 1982, toward the end of the Dirty War, and the first chapter appeared in Italy in 1984. As was the practice of the time, these chapters were intended to be collected in "graphic albums," traditionally eight installments of eight pages with a new introduction or epilogue, or what would now be considered graphic novels. As such, this book is constructed of four parts, or four graphic novels, with an authors' introduction for each part.

PERRAMUS

THE CITY AND OBLIVION



When a man awakens, naked in an unknown lover's bed, he is beside a woman who has devoured his past. His fear and cowardice have pursued him; he has asked for oblivion, and it has been granted. He is another person, or rather, he is no one. And he won't understand his conscription for a horrifying task; he must erase all trace of his fellow political dissidents, who he has abandoned to their deaths.

Dressed in other people's clothes—possessing only an antique guide to the city he doesn't recognize as his own and a book that speculates about the stuff of dreams and the sense of time—from now on, he will be nothing more than Perramus, only identified by a coat's brand name. Irremissibly condemned to be what he does, Perramus can't help but feel, nonetheless, that he is not free. Oblivion is not innocent, he senses. It never is. Memory will pull at him like an abyss, a gaping pit always one step behind him. He could fall into it forever without ever reaching the bottom. His is a round trip, for, from here, his travels are a metaphor for another journey, an interior one, where he loses himself and then finds himself again.

PERRAMUS BOOK I
The Pilot of Oblivion

In his next adventures, this protagonist will look for a past (though it may be fictional, like the one Mr. Whitesnow provides), an identity (though it may be just a role in a film), and a sense of purpose (the mission of an insurgent group). That is, until the chance (or the devil's spite) that weaves through his life puts him, once again, before that woman's body. And then everything will begin again. Or not. A Blind Master—Borges—will give him keys and paradoxes, will show him that "density" and "destiny" are anagrams, the back and forth of a single indestructible plot.

Of course, there are other things in the story beyond reflexive whims. There are characters: Canelones and The Enemy, two born companions with costar pedigrees, adventuring archetypes that are updated, realistic, and justified. They are incarnations of the "muscle" and the "self-interested sidekick" caricatures. The first, Canelones, is a mixed-race Uruguayan, a blue-collar worker whose knowledge, rooted in his personal history, borders on skepticism. He grounds and anchors Perramus's existential conflicts, which seem driven by the winds of petit-bourgeois intellectual guilt. The second, The Enemy, has the makings of a technical virtuoso. He hasn't grown nearly enough, but he has sudden moments of tenderness, and bravery born of incorruptible loyalty.

It's not hard to transpose the scenery of *Perramus* on the real Latin America, distorted by a lens of controlled delirium. That Santa María is the writer Juan Carlos Onetti's Santa María del Buen Ayre, of course. The insurgent group (Volunteer Vanguard for Victory) are extreme chimeras; with their age-old methods, the marshals are variations of the junta's colonels and generals. Anyone who assumes Mr. Whitesnow and his seven diminutive puppet helpers represent the ubiquitous northern superpower and its methods of persuasion won't be much mistaken. But claiming to see merely a transparent symbol impoverishes the text and the history. Something similar could be said about the episode of the film set in the desert: the sale of images with the goal of a mythic affinity doesn't suffice to explain the mad project of making fake films. The "bad guys" don't have the wisdom of an empire, but rather the weakness and contradictions of real people.

In four sequences of two episodes, the first book of *Perramus* plays with parallelisms and homologies, abused parody and overused cliché. This is no accident. Rather, it is an homage to adventure, a tribute. The heroes have names that are supposed to define their origin or nature, running off in classic finales that see them lost on the horizon or in a cloud of dust—boat, plane, car, wagon. They profess a loyalty that is forged in being put to the test.

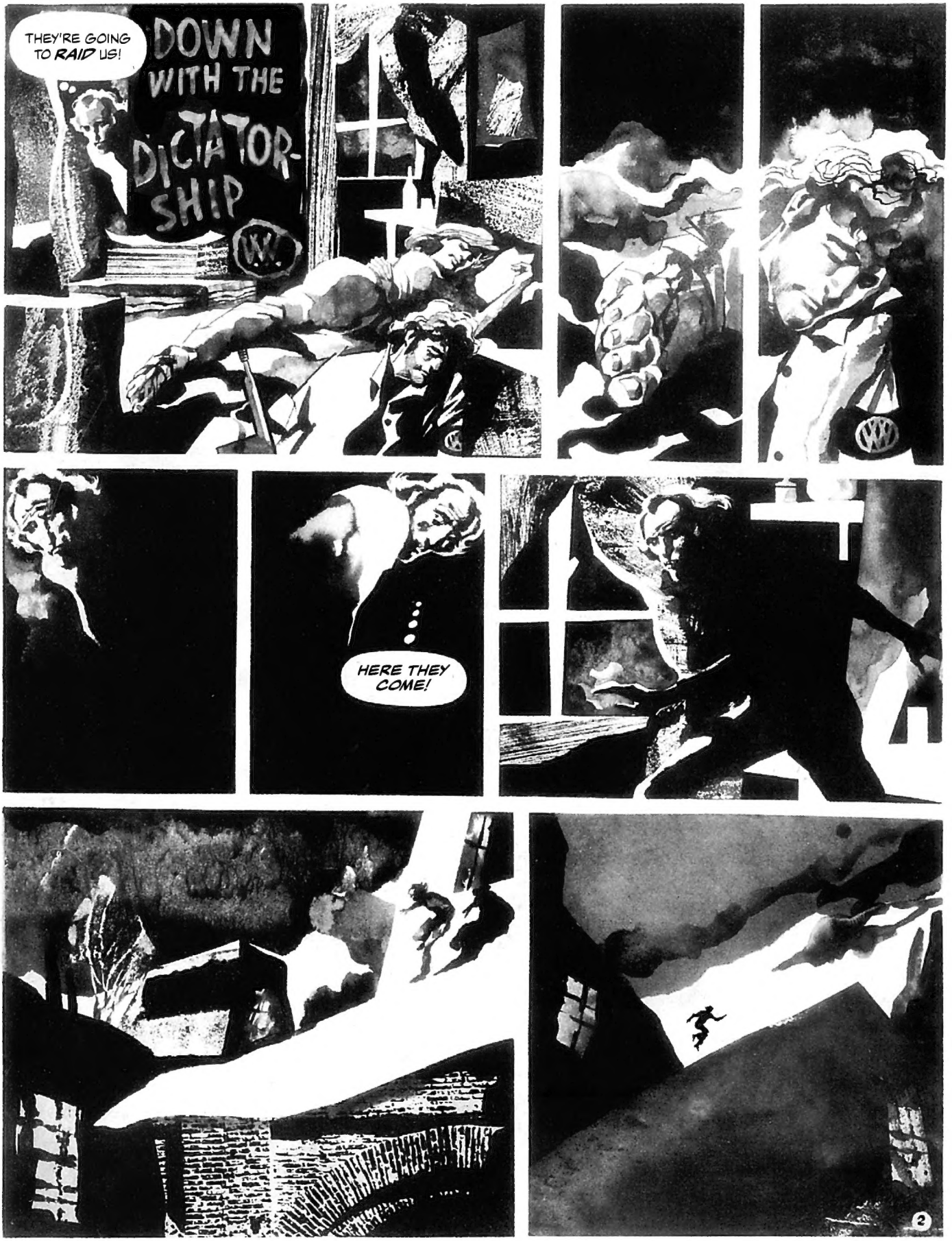
The final journey of Borges throughout history is an homage to the "problem-novel" and to his "The Garden of Forking Paths." His presence is acknowledged throughout the whole story, from the name of the cabaret at the beginning—The Aleph—to the final note.

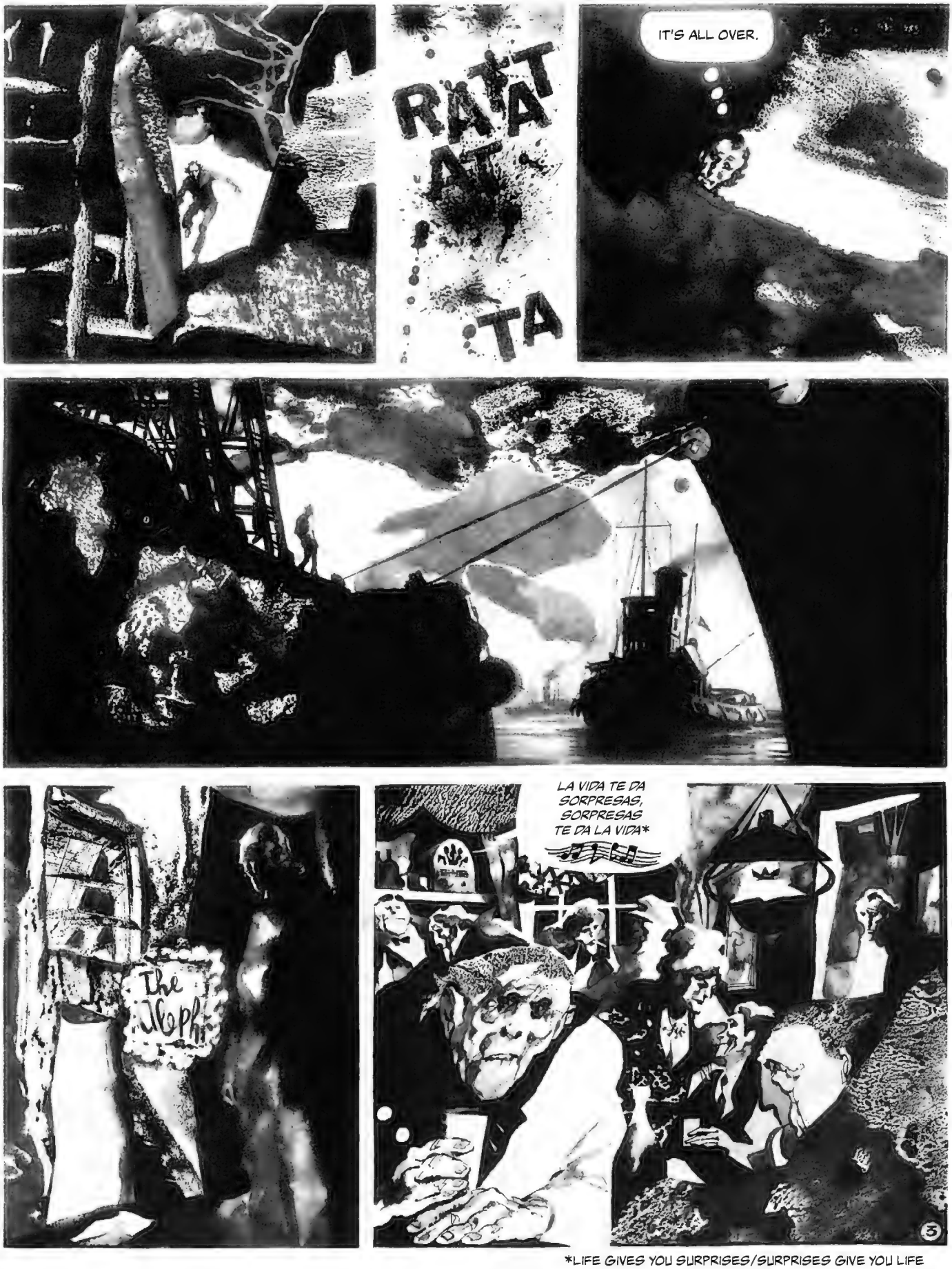
Just one more thing: the destiny of Perramus —the "density"—will be further, tomorrow, in the adventures yet to come.

—**ALBERTO BRECCIA** and **JUAN SASTURAIN**

1 Known and Unknown

TAP
TAP
WHAT WAS THAT?
THEY'VE FOUND ME!!


THEY'RE GOING TO RAID US!
DOWN WITH THE DICTATOR-SHIP
HERE THEY COME!
2



*LIFE GIVES YOU SURPRISES/SURPRISES GIVE YOU LIFE

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, BABY?
I'M BAD OFF. I WANT TO DIE.
WELL, FOR WHAT YOU'VE GOT, THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS, BABY.
MARÍA, FOR PLEASURE...
ROSA, FOR LUCK...
MARGARITA, FOR OBLIVION...
OBLIVION.
I WANT TO FORGET...
YOU'LL FORGET...
4

YOU'LL FORGET...
YOU'LL FORGET...
YOU'LL FORGET...
WHO... AM I?
WHO ARE YOU?
THEY'RE COMING TO FIND YOU NOW. GET DRESSED.
WHO'S COMING? WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
PUT THIS ON. IT BELONGED TO A SWEDISH SAILOR. HURRY.
5

TAKE THIS. IT WAS A SCOTTISH CAPTAIN'S.
THEY ALL LEAVE SOMETHING. SOMETIMES EVERYTHING. THIS BELONGED TO AN ARGENTINE STOWAWAY. THERE ARE THINGS INSIDE.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. BUT I THINK I LOVE YOU.
TO LOVE ME IS TO LOVE OBLIVION. THAT, YOU HAVE DONE.
HERE'S ANOTHER ONE. COME ON, TAKE HIM.
COME ON, WE SAIL IN TEN MINUTES!
6

LARGO, WHAT'S THIS ONE'S NAME?
HE DOESN'T KNOW. HE SAYS HE FORGOT.
LET'S SEE, MAGGOT...
PERRAMUS
OK, "PERRAMUS," LET'S GO. THERE'RE STILL SOME PACKAGES TO LOAD.
WHY'RE WE LOADING THESE? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
LATER, WE HAVE TO THROW THEM INTO THE OPEN SEA.

LOOK!
THEY TAKE THEM OUT TO SEA AND DUMP THEM. THEY DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE.
WHO ARE THEY?
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, HUH?
NO...
FOR THE BEST, PERRAMUS, FOR THE BEST.
8

2 The Depth of the Sea

ONE MORE, PERRAMUS.
ONE MORE, LARGO.

HOW MANY PACKAGES WAS IT THIS TIME, CHUPETE?
A LOT: 45.
YEAH?
AH!
AND HOW MUCH IS THERE FOR ME THIS TIME?
THE SAME AS ALWAYS. IN DOLLARS, DEPOSITED INTO THE FOREIGN ACCOUNT.
TAKE CARE OF THIS BUSINESS, CHUPETE. IT'S SAFE AND HYGIENIC.
HYGIENIC. IF NOTHING ELSE, IT'S THAT.
2

V.N.
FUCKING DISGUSTING!
LUCKILY, THAT WAS THE LAST ONE. IT'S OVER.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. THOSE BAGS AND THOSE STONES ARE FOR YOUR OWN PACKAGES.
WAIT. THERE'S ANOTHER PACKAGE IN THE HOLD. I SAW THEM HIDE IT.
TELL CHUPETE THAT THEY'RE FINISHED. THEY HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH NOW.
WE'LL SEE YOU--IN THE HOLD!
3

EVERYTHING'S READY, CHUPETE.
GOOD. WE'LL IMPLEMENT THE PLAN.
WHAT PLAN?
MINE. THE HAUL IS OVER, LARGO. THIS TIME WE WON'T RETURN TO PORT. WE'RE GOING TO THE ISLAND.
I'M BRINGING SOMETHING FOR MR. WHITESNOW. EVIDENCE, WE COULD CALL IT. HE WANTS TO GET AWAY FROM THE MARSHALS' REGIME AND WILL PAY HANDSOMELY FOR ANYTHING THAT COULD SERVE TO PUT INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON THEM.
A COMPROMISING PACKAGE?
EXACTLY: THE 46TH. THE SIGHTSEEING TRIP IS OVER, LARGO.
4

A GUNSHOT, DEVOTO.
I ALREADY KNEW. SOMETHING HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM.
LET'S DO WHAT WE DECIDED TO.
QUICK. THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR US.
ARE YOU BRAVE, PERRAMUS?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT I THINK I HAVEN'T BEEN.
5

HERE THEY COME. READY, DEVOTO?
COME OUT... QUICKLY!
WHAT'S THIS?
THE 46TH.
EXPLAIN YOURSELF! WHAT 46TH?
6

THROW HIM OVER?
NO!
DON'T THROW HIM OVER!
IT'S SEGOVIA BARROS, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION TO THE MARSHALS. HOW MUCH IS HE WORTH, CHUPETE?
WAIT. THIS IS SEGOVIA BARROS.
THE BLACK MAN LIES.
DUMP HIM!
7

WHY'RE YOU STARING AT ME? WE'RE SAVED, AREN'T WE?
BUT DEVOTO IS DEAD. YOU USED HIM AS A SHIELD INSTEAD OF THROWING HIM OVER WITH THE BAG OPEN TO SAVE HIM.
AS WE AGREED? MAYBE I *FORGOT.* AND I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO USES FORGETTING TO SURVIVE.
LET'S FINISH UP, PERRAMUS. IT'S ALMOST DAWN.
8

3 Mr. Whitesnow Island, Co.

YOU WANT IT OR NOT?
HOW MUCH IS THE BODY OF THE MAIN POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO THE MARSHALS WORTH? WHO WAS REPORTED AS EXILED TODAY...
WHAT HAPPENED TO CHUPETE AND THE NN?
CHUPETE.
THE NN.
THE MERCHANDISE IS ROTTING, AND WON'T SERVE YOU MUCH LONGER. IT'S THE TROPICAL CLIMATE OF THIS ISLET--THIS STRATEGIC NATION, MR. WHITE-SNOW.

WHERE IS THE BODY?
WELL-GUARDED ON THE BEACH, WAITING FOR US TO FINISH OUR BUSINESS.
I'LL BUY. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
TO START, I WANT--
TIME.
SURE, TIME IS MONEY.
SO YOU SAY.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, STRANGER?
2

SEE FOR YOURSELF: PERRAMUS.
PERRAMUS
THAT'S A BRAND, NOT A NAME.
I HAVE NO NAME, MR. WHITESNOW, BECAUSE I HAVE NO MEMORY. I WAS BORN YESTERDAY AND I NEED TIME: DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS TO REMEMBER.
OHHHH, LORD.
THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I DON'T HAVE, PERRAMUS.
BAH. I HAVE ENOUGH, IN TRUTH. WHAT MEMORIES DO YOU NEED? THIRTY-FIVE, 40 YEARS--
ENOUGH PHILOSOPHIZING. THE BODY IS OUT IN THE SUN, AND WILL SOON BELONG TO THE FLIES.
3

SEÑOR MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY, VERIFY WHAT THEY'VE SAID.
EE-YESSIRR.
SEÑOR TREASURY SECRETARY, PROVIDE THE BIG ONE WITH 6,000 ISLET PESOS, CASH, TO SPEND HERE.
EE-YESSIRR.
BUT--
CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, RETRIEVE MY MONEY.
EE-YESSIRR.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF WHITESNOW AND THE SEVEN DWARFS, PERRAMUS?
I HAVE CULTURAL MEMORY, THOUGH NO BIOGRAPHY, MISTER.
THAT YOU WILL HAVE, STRANGER. COME WITH ME.
HEY, WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
4

TAKE WHAT'S YOURS, AND ENJOY IT.
I'M GOING, FRIEND. I'LL COME BACK TO FIND YOU!
PERRAMUS, LOOK WHAT I'VE GOT!
5

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? LOOK WHAT YOU CAN BUY WITH 5,000 PESOS, CASH, PERRAMUS.
CALL ME RI-RICHARD. RICHARD J., KIDDO.
DON'T CALL ME "KIDDO."
6

RICHARD J. WAS GOLDEN GLOVES CHAMPION IN CHICAGO, 1930, KIDDO.
I SPARRED WITH THE URUGUAYAN CHAMPION DOGOMAR MARTINEZ, "RICHARD." AND THAT'S MY OWN MEMORY, NOT BORROWED.
HEY, RICHARD. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU TOMORROW.
FINE.
C'MON, LET'S GO CHECK OUT THOSE GIRLS.
BUT I LIED TO YOU A LITTLE BIT, EH?
ABOUT THE GOLDEN GLOVES CHAMPIONSHIP?
MISTER-- WHAT DID YOU LIE ABOUT?
SHUT UP. LET'S GO.

WHAT DID HE SAY, AMIGO?
NOTHING, "RICHARD." PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU HAVE RIGHT NEXT TO YOU. IT'S EXPENSIVE.
MY NAME IS BETTY.
AND I--
I'M RITA.
WHAT?
RITA.
FOR A MOMENT, IT SEEMED LIKE--
NEVER MIND, NEVER MIND. WANT ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT MY NEW CHILDHOOD IN ILLINOIS, AMIGO?
8

The
Necessary
Enemy

THERE'RE CLOCKS EVERY-WHERE.
THEY AREN'T CLOCKS, THEY'RE INFLATION RATES. THE ISLAND HAS THE WORLD RECORD, FASTER THAN ISRAEL OR SANTA MARÍA.
THE CLOCK IS LIKE A TAXI, AMIGO. BUT IT DOESN'T COUNT BY METERS, BUT BY TIME. EVERY HOUR IS 10 PERCENT MORE. THESE WOMEN WILL LEAVE US BROKE.
ANOTHER HALF-WOMAN--BUT THE BOTTOM HALF, PLEASE.
ha ha ha!
ha ha ha!

RICHARD J--MR. WHITESNOW REQUIRES YOU. YOU MUST REPORT, SINCE TOMORROW IS--
THE DAY OF THE ENEMY.
WHO IS THE ENEMY?
HIM!
THE ISLAND PRISON
4 2 1941
Herald
58 Pages
Dept. PE, 350 Fifth
New York 10001.
THE ENEMY
THREATENS OUR N
her so they could
front of me. We tall
call last night and
Spike that she an
movie together. I ha
he would phone ag
Scott said no, and t
told this case exa
But I kept my idea.
THIS!
Scott was trying
to some other towr
nessee girls could
Gloria and I both
AN ENEMY IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, RICHARD J. IT HAS SERVED WELL SO FAR--IT JUSTIFIES ME.
BUT I'VE HAD THIS ONE FOR TOO MANY YEARS, AND NOW THAT THE MARSHALS HAVE BROKEN ME, I WANT TO BE DEMOCRATIC. I DON'T NEED HIM AS A PRISONER, ANYMORE.
2

I'M GOING TO FREE HIM!
HE'S IN JAIL?
WHERE?
THE ISLAND IS HIS PRISON. THE CAPTIVE IS HIS ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPE.
THIS IS THE PLANE HE BOMBED US WITH. IT'S BEEN HERE A LONG TIME. SOMETHING BROKE AND HE HAD TO LAND. WE CAPTURED IT.
AND SO, WE INSTITUTED THE DAY OF THE ENEMY, WHICH HAPPENS EVERY YEAR. ON THIS DAY WE RELEASE IT AND, BEFORE HE CAN REACH THE PLANE--
ZAP! ONCE AGAIN, IT'S LOCKED UP. UNTIL ONE DAY, THE ENEMY--
3

UNTIL ONE DAY I TRICKED THEM: INSTEAD OF TRYING TO LEAVE, I STAYED, FOUND A WOMAN. AND YOU, HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
ELEMENTARY. BY LOOKING.
BUT MR. WHITESNOW'S DEMOCRACY HAD COME TOO LATE, BOYS: THE ENEMY NO LONGER EXISTS.
YOU'LL COME WITH US, OLD MAN. YOUR FREEDOM IS UP.
NO!
4

LET'S GO, WARDEN. TELL MR. WHITESNOW THAT THE ENEMY IS FLEEING.
C'MON. WITH YOU, ENEMY, HISTORY HAS RETURNED TO THE ISLAND.
NOW WE'LL SEE IF IT'S TRUE THIS TIME.
HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU ATTACKED, ENEMY?
THIRTY, 40, MAYBE.
THERE WE GO!
5

AND WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM, WHEN YOU CAME?
I DON'T KNOW. I KNOW I HAD BOMBS.
THESE WERE THE MACHINE GUNS.
I THINK THAT--
6

I WANT TO GO BACK.
IN TRUTH, MR. WHITESNOW STILL NEEDS ME. HE DOESN'T EXIST WITHOUT ME.
AND I... THERE, I'M THE ENEMY. I HAVE MY OWN DAY.
FINE. JUMP IF YOU WANT TO.
GOODBYE, AND THANK YOU.

I CAN'T SEE HIM ANYMORE.
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
WHAT?
LIKE GUNSHOTS, OR EXPLOSIONS, DOWN THERE.
IT COULDN'T BE. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
IT COULD BE THE MOTORS.
YES, IT'S THE ENGINES.
8

5
The Day
of the
American

WHERE'RE WE GOING, ENEMY?
I DON'T THINK WE CAN CROSS THE DESERT WITH SO LITTLE FUEL. WE'LL HAVE TO LAND.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, PERRAMUS?
FORGET HIM. HE'S BEEN LIKE THAT FOR A WEEK, STUCK IN BORGES AND THE PEUSAR GUIDE TO THE STREETS OF SANTA MARÍA.
EH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THERE.
1

I DON'T KNOW. SOMETHING. WHEN I WOKE IN THAT ROOM NEXT TO THAT WOMAN, EMPTY AND MEMORYLESS, SHE GAVE ME THESE CLOTHES.
AND THIS BAG THAT SHE TOLD ME BELONGED TO AN ARGENTINE. THE GUIDE AND THE BOOK WERE IN IT, AND IT MUST MEAN SOMETHING FOR ME.
GUÍA Peuser
BORGES
THERE'S A CHARACTER, FUNES THE MEMORIOUS, WHO, UNLIKE ME, IS UNABLE TO FORGET. AND THE REALITY OF IT IS UNBEARABLE, BECAUSE--
LOOK!
AN AIRPORT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT!
THAT ISN'T ON ANY MAP, BOYS. IT MUST BE SMUGGLERS.
EITHER WAY, WE'RE LANDING. WE WON'T HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.
2

GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF, PERRAMUS!
GET A LOAD OF THIS. IT'S INCREDIBLE.
EVERYTHING'S CARDBOARD AND WOOD. JUST A SET.
GET OUT OF THERE, GRINGOS. LET'S GO.
3

LET'S GO. WE'LL TAKE 'EM TO SAM.
THREE MORE INDIANS, SAM. WE CAN MAKE THE ATTACK SCENE EVEN BETTER.
DON'T WORRY, RONCO.

NO. THIS BIG ONE I LIKE WITH A SCIMITAR AND TURBAN, FOR "DESERT OF FIRE."
THE PILOT, LEAVE HIM AS HE IS--B-29 AND EVERYTHING. HE'LL WORK FOR THE ATTACK ON THE SICILIAN AIRPORT IN "LANDING."
THIS ONE. YES... BUT NOT AN INDIAN.
YOU CAN MAKE HIM A KIND OF CLINT EASTWOOD FROM THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY.
MAGGIE, GET OUR NEW CLINT UP TO DATE. AND TAKE THEM.
VERY NICE, MAGGIE.
AFTER YOU, CLINT. LET'S GO.
5

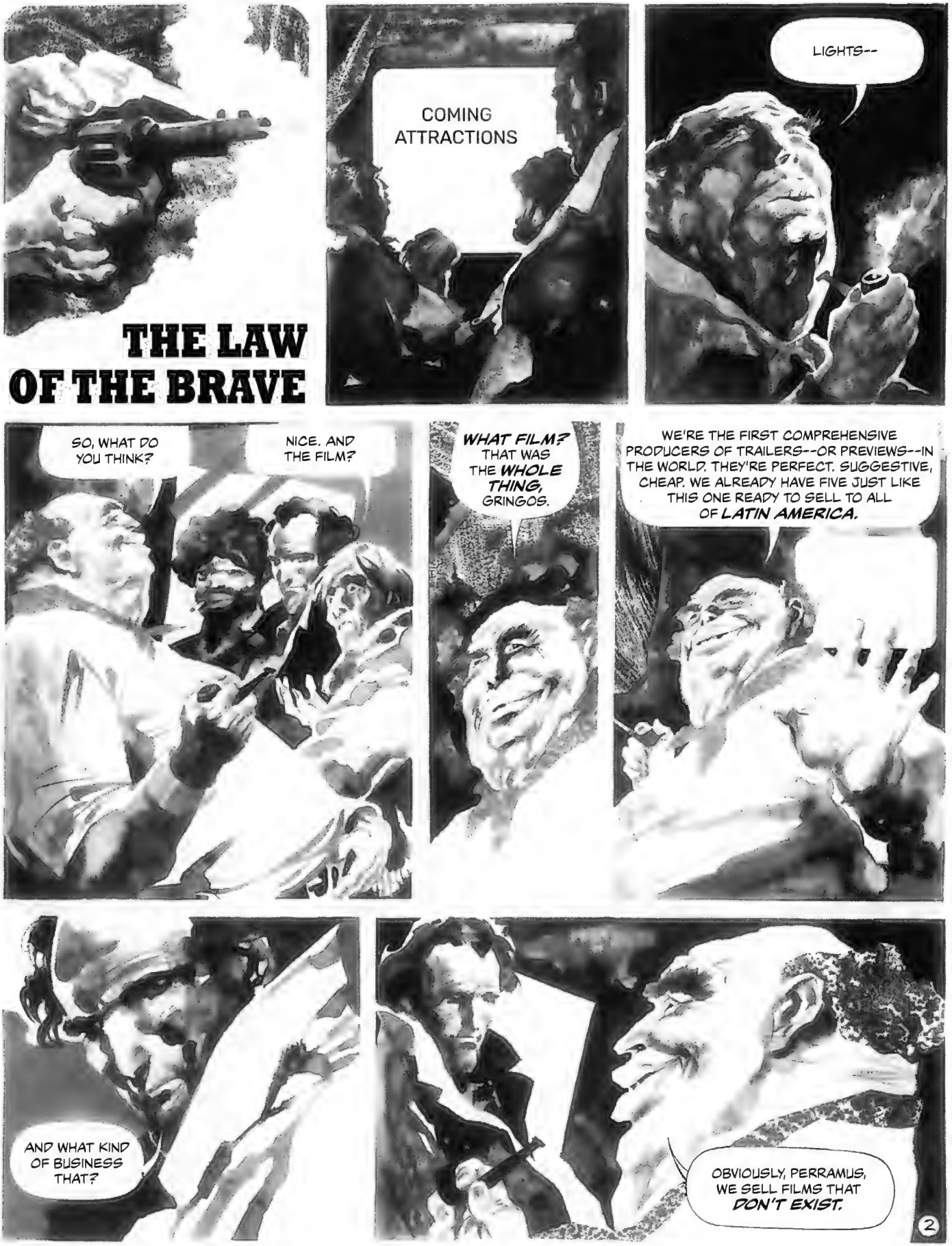
WHAT DO YOU WANT, GRINGO?
WHISKY, TO START.
SAM'S MEN TOOK MY FRIENDS TO PRISON.
DON'T TALK ABOUT SAM, GRINGO. WHAT DO YOU KNOW HIM?
THAT HE'S A MAD-MAN WHO'S DRAGGED EVERYONE IN THIS TOWN INTO HIS MADNESS.
I'M NOT GONNA LET A FILTHY DOG--
6

YOU KILLED HIM. SAM WILL NEVER FORGIVE THIS, FOREIGNER.
BRING ME TO HIM, D'ARLIN'.
C'MON. WHO'S THE NEXT PUPPET?
MARSHAL'S OFFICE
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, GRINGO. SAM OWNS EVERYTHING AROUND HERE, INCLUDING YOU.
I'M HERE, FRIENDS.

KRAAAKK!
HA!
HAi
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S TOTAL MADNESS: THE BLANK BULLETS, THE SETS--
HEY-- WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
LISTEN. WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE PLANE.
PERRAMUS--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
8

The Bridge

IT'S YOUR TURN, VILLAIN!
KAREN, THIS TIME YOU'RE MINE.
SEX
WE WON'T LET THE LANDLORDS EXPLOIT US ANYMORE.
WE WON'T TOLERATE--
REVOLUTION
COMING SOON...
1


THE LAW OF THE BRAVE
COMING ATTRACTIONS
LIGHTS--
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
NICE. AND THE FILM?
WHAT FILM? THAT WAS THE WHOLE THING, GRINGOS.
WE'RE THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE PRODUCERS OF TRAILERS--OR PREVIEWS--IN THE WORLD. THEY'RE PERFECT. SUGGESTIVE, CHEAP. WE ALREADY HAVE FIVE JUST LIKE THIS ONE READY TO SELL TO ALL OF LATIN AMERICA.
AND WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS THAT?
OBVIOUSLY, PERRAMUS, WE SELL FILMS THAT DON'T EXIST.
2

WHEN FILM DISTRIBUTORS SEE THESE SAMPLES OF SEX, VIOLENCE, AND REVOLUTION FOR SO CHEAP, THEY'LL *FLOOD* US WITH ADVANCES. DISCOVERING, ONLY TOO LATE, THE *EMPTY* CANISTERS--
HEY, COME BACK. THERE'S *MONEY* HERE.
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. THEY'RE *CRAZY.*
BUT THE PLANE IS IN PIECES--
WELLS, FARGO & CO
THAT WILL WORK.
AAAYEE, LET'S GO!
WE'RE CLOSE TO THE BORDER.

CRACK CRACK CRACK CRACK

CRACK CRACK CRACK

AAAAH!
HURRY, THIS MOVIE ENDS BADLY.
TOO REAL.
WE'RE CROSSING THE BORDER, BOYS!
WE'RE SAFE.
WHAT NOW?
HALT, THERE!
5

IT'S A DIFFERENT MOVIE NOW, ENEMY.
THIS IS NO MOVIE, OLD MAN.
LIBERATED TERRITORY
WHAT'S THE SYMBOL WITH THE THREE VS?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE, BOYS? HA HA!
I'M THE BLUE COMMANDER OF THE VOLUNTEER VANGUARD FOR VICTORY. WHO ARE YOU?
THAT SYMBOL-- I THINK--
6

WASHINGTON SOSA, URUGUAYAN. MEAT PACKER--THEY CALL ME CANELONES BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE I WAS BORN.
I'M EZEQUIEL GORRITI, ISLANDER. I WAS THE "ENEMY" OF MR. WHITESNOW UNTIL THESE MEN FREED ME.
AND YOU? WHO'RE YOU?
I-- I THINK I REMEMBER THAT SYMBOL. BUT--
PERRAMUS...
PERRAMUS...
PERRAMUS, WAKE UP.

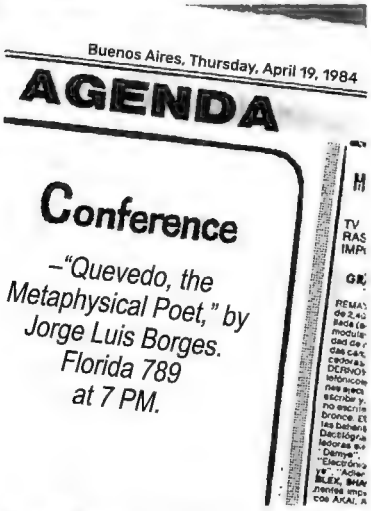
NO! I DON'T WANT TO! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING! I'M NO ONE!
CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN. CANELONES ALREADY EXPLAINED WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU. DON'T WORRY, PERRAMUS. WE SAW YOUR BOOK, YOUR ANNOTATIONS, THE GUIDE TO SANTA MARÍA. YOU'RE EDUCATED, YOU SPEAK FRENCH AND ENGLISH.
YOU COULD BE VERY USEFUL TO THE REVOLUTION. YOU'LL GO TO SANTA MARÍA AND COMPLETE A MISSION WITH THE MAESTRO.
NO. I WON'T GO.
YOU WILL GO. YOUR COMPANIONS WILL STAY HERE AS HOSTAGES. YOU WILL COMPLETE THE MISSION, FOR THEM.
BESIDES, IT'S THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE AGAINST THE MARSHALS' DICTATORSHIP, PERRAMUS.
THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE. YES.
YES.
8

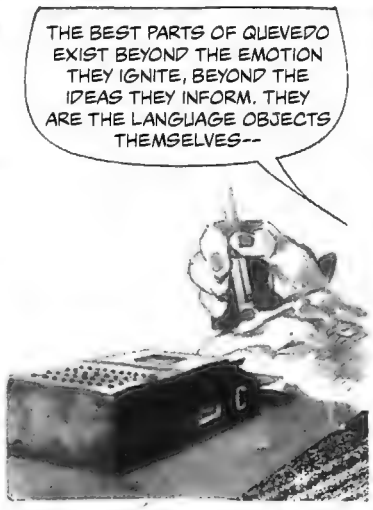
7 Verse by Verse

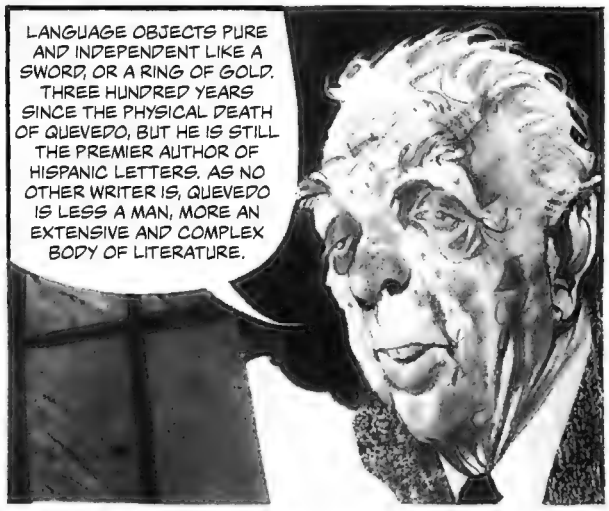
DON'T WORRY, PERRAMUS. DO EVERYTHING AS INSTRUCTED, AND BY TONIGHT YOU'LL BE BACK WITH YOUR FRIENDS. I HAVE YOUR TICKETS, LUGGAGE, AND DOCUMENTS. YOU'LL BE A CANADIAN JOURNALIST. THE FLIGHT WILL GET YOU--
--TO SANTA MARÍA IN TWO HOURS.
WHEN YOU LAND, WAIT. THEY'LL FIND YOU.
PM
PARDON, MONSIEUR. JEAN JACQUES PERRAMUS, JORNALISTE DE LE MARTIN DE TORONTO-- C'EST VOUS?
OUI, C'EST MOI...
MMMMMMM.
1

THE KEY IS IN THE FILTER. MEMORIZE IT AND DESTROY IT.
YOU HAVE A RESERVATION AT THE SHERATON. GO BUY A COPY OF TODAY'S CLARION AND CHECK THE LIST OF CONFERENCES. THE FIRST ONE. WATCH AND RECORD IT ALL. ALL, COMPRENEZ-VOUS?
D'ACCORD, MONSIEURS. AU REVOIR!
TAXI 532
Blow by blow
Verse by verse
2

ClarionX


Buenos Aires, Thursday, April 19, 1984
AGENDA
Conference
–"Quevedo, the Metaphysical Poet," by Jorge Luis Borges. Florida 789 at 7 PM.


THE BEST PARTS OF QUEVEDO EXIST BEYOND THE EMOTION THEY IGNITE, BEYOND THE IDEAS THEY INFORM. THEY ARE THE LANGUAGE OBJECTS THEMSELVES--


LANGUAGE OBJECTS PURE AND INDEPENDENT LIKE A SWORD, OR A RING OF GOLD. THREE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE PHYSICAL DEATH OF QUEVEDO, BUT HE IS STILL THE PREMIER AUTHOR OF HISPANIC LETTERS. AS NO OTHER WRITER IS, QUEVEDO IS LESS A MAN, MORE AN EXTENSIVE AND COMPLEX BODY OF LITERATURE.

AND WHICH TEXT, ACCORDING TO YOU, BORGES, IS THE FUNDAMENTAL ONE-- WHERE IS THE KEY TO HIS THINKING?
NOT THE BEST, PERHAPS, BUT THE MOST BRILLIANT, THIS SONNET HAS FOUND A FAME AS FAIR AS ANY DREAMED OF. IT GOES:

"THE LAST SHADOW A CLOUDLESS DAY MAY CAST ON ME COULD CLOSE MY EYES; AND THIS, MY SOUL, MAY BE FREED BY AN HOUR EAGER TO FLATTER ITS ARDOR"
3

"BUT ON THAT FAR SHORE IT WILL NOT FORSAKE THE MEMORY WHERE IT BURNED; MY FLAME CAN SWIM FRIGID WATER AND WILL FLAUNT SO CRUEL A LAW."
"SOUL, LONG IMPRISONED BY A GOD, VEINS, FUEL YOU GAVE TO THE BLAZE, MARROW, GLORIOUSLY YOU BURNED; IT WILL LEAVE ITS BODY, NOT ITS CARES; THEY WILL BE ASHES, BUT STILL WILL FEEL;"
"DUST THEY WILL BE, BUT DUST IN LOVE."
NOBODY MOVE!
STOP!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MONSIEUR. YOU CAN GO.
THEY TOOK THE GIRL WHO ASKED A QUESTION.
4

I BARELY HAVE TIME TO GET TO THE AIRPORT.
HELLO, PERRAMUS.
HOW'D YOU GET IN?
SOMETHING WENT WRONG AT THE CONFERENCE, OLD MAN. I'M DAGOR, THE EMERGENCY CONTACT THE COMMANDANT TOLD YOU ABOUT. NOW WE HAVE TO HURRY.
JE NE COMPREND PAS, SEÑORITA.
THE FLIGHT IS SUSPENDED AND WE HAVE TO DECODE THE MESSAGE RIGHT NOW. MY PASSWORD IS "ANTONIO MACHADO." WHAT'S THE KEY PHRASE?
5

GETTING IN WAS EASY. PROSTITUTES COMING TO SERVICE THE PASSENGERS IS NORMAL HERE. I DID NOTHING BUT REPLACE THE ONE YOU WERE SENT. SHE WAS PRETTIER THAN I AM, OF COURSE. THE PHRASE?
"BLOW BY BLOW, VERSE BY VERSE." I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS.
THOUGH, THE END OF THE PRESENTATION WAS JUST VERSES. BORGES RECITED THE KEY SONNET.
THAT'S WHAT YOU HAD TO HEAR, THEN.
THE LAST SHADOW A CLOUDLESS DAY
THWAP!
/ MAY CAST ON ME COULD CLOSE MY EYES;
AND THIS, MY SOUL, MAY BE FREED BY..
HEAR THAT?
THWAP!
ONE VERSE, ONE BLOW.
6

NOW I UNDERSTAND. HE HAD A PEN IN HIS HAND WHILE RECITING. HE MARKED SOME VERSES--
WITH A BLOW FROM THE PEN: "BLOW BY BLOW, VERSE BY VERSE."
"BUT ON THAT FAR SHORE IT WILL NOT--"
"MY FLAME CAN SWIM FRIGID WATER / AND WILL FLAUNT SO CRUEL A LAW."
THWAP!
WE HAVE TO TRANSCRIBE THE MARKED PHRASES.
DONE. THEY'RE: "A CLOUDLESS DAY," "BUT ON THAT FAR SHORE," AND "WILL FLAUNT SO CRUEL A LAW..."
WHAT DOES IT MEAN, DAGOR?
THE "CLOUDLESS DAY" IS SUNDAY. THE FIRST COLOR THAT DISSOLVES AT SEVEN. "THE FAR SHORE" IS THE BANK OF--
URUGUAY!

AND THE "CRUEL LAW" TO BE "FLAUNTED" IS PRISON, OR DEATH.
SO, IT SAYS: SOMEONE, ON SUNDAY, IN URUGUAY, WILL FLAUNT PRISON; OR MAYBE, THEY'LL ESCAPE FROM PRISON--YES.
EXACTLY, MY FRIEND.
BUT WHY?
NO WITNESSES, PERRAMUS.
WE DON'T NEED THEM.
LEAVE. NOW!
WE BUY GOLD
PIPES
8

8 Unknown and Known

BORGES
BORGES
I'M JEAN JACQUES PERRAMUS, FROM THE MATIN IN TORONTO. I'M LOOKING FOR SR. BORGES.
COME IN, SEÑOR.
PERRAMUS.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU SINCE YESTERDAY. IT WAS LIKELY YOU'D COME TO SEE ME, SEÑOR...
YOU HAVE AN EXCESSIVE NAME, SEÑOR PERRAMUS. IT EVOKES SOMETHING OF LATIN AND MAGIC.
I'M JUST THE NAME.

THAT SOUNDS OVERLY LITERARY, IF YOU'LL PERMIT MY SAYING SO.
I'M SORRY, BUT MY WHOLE LIFE IS A FANTASY, A STORY.
EVEN WORSE. REALITY ITSELF IS A FANTASTIC INVENTION. THE STORY IS--
NONETHELESS, YOU GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT FICTION; ACT, TAKE SIDES, TRY TO CHANGE IT.
YOU REFER TO THE CLUMSY ENIGMAS AND CODED MESSAGES THAT AFFRONTED US YESTERDAY THROUGH QUEVEDO.
YES. YOU PASSED CODED INFORMATION FOR THE VVV THAT I RECORDED. WHY DID YOU DO THAT? AREN'T YOU RIGHT-WING?
2

THERE WAS A TIME I AFFILIATED WITH THE RIGHT, WITH THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, AS AN ACT OF POLITICAL SKEPTICISM, OF MY VOCATION TO FIGHT LOST CAUSES. NOW, YOU COULD ASSUME WITHOUT MISTAKE THAT MY MOTIVES ARE THE SAME.
THEN, IT WOULDN'T MATTER WHAT WE DO, BUT WHY. I'VE TRIED TO LIVE WITH INTEGRITY, AND--
THAT'S TOO PRETENTIOUS, MY FRIEND. I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO GIVE MY LIFE WEIGHT. DESTINY AND DENSITY. FREEDOM ISN'T ABOUT SHAPING OUR LIFE BUT IN ACCOMPANYING ITS MOVEMENTS. BE ALERT AND READY.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED: A BOOK OF YOURS BROUGHT ME TO YOU. AND ANOTHER LITTLE BOOK--
REALITY LIKES SYMMETRY. IF ONE BOOK BROUGHT YOU, THE OTHER WILL RETURN YOU TO YOUR DESTINY.
NO, THIS IS JUST AN OUT-OF-DATE GUIDE TO SANTA MARÍA FROM 1936.
GUIA Peuser
SEÑOR!
3

SEÑOR, THE OPPRESSION HAS COME.
ALREADY? AND I, WHO DREAMS OF A DESTINY OF LETTERS, COME TO MY END LIKE THIS.
LET'S NOT END IN LITERATURE, MY FRIEND. YOU CAN ESCAPE, PERRAMUS.
NO. THIS TIME, I'LL FIGHT.
QUICK! WHERE ARE THEY?
4

PERRAMUS!
WHAT HAPPENED?
AS SOON AS THE MESSAGE REACHED THE MOUNTAIN, THEY SET US FREE AND WE CAME TO FIND YOU. WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.
GOOD. BUT I HAVE TO STOP AT THE HOTEL FIRST TO GET MY THINGS. WAIT HERE WITH THE MAESTRO.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
GOOD AFTER-NOON, SEÑORES. IF SOMEONE COULD EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

SHERATON HOTEL, PLEASE.
I DON'T KNOW IT. WHAT'S THE ADDRESS?
HOLD ON, I'LL CHECK.
HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS
Sheraton... Av.del Bajo 300
300 AVENUE DEL BAJO.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE CURRENT NAME, BUT--
PERFECT, SEÑOR.
HEY. WHAT'S ALL THIS? WHAT HAPPENED?
300 AVENUE DEL BAJO. WE'VE ARRIVED AT YOUR DESTINATION.
6

JAPANESE GARDEN
I SEE. THE SAME ADDRESS, BUT IN 1936.
HE SAID TO ME: "IF ONE BOOK BROUGHT YOU, THE OTHER WILL RETURN YOU."
LEARN YOUR DESTINY WITH MADAME MARGARITA THE LADY of ALEPH
IT'S HER. HER...
FINALLY. YOU'RE FINALLY HERE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?
WHAT I FORGOT-- I WANT TO KNOW MY PAST.
PERRAMUS, WHAT YOU LIVED IS STILL BEFORE YOU. YOU CAN'T HAVE A MEMORY OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN. THAT IS THE WAY.
7

BUT THEN, WHAT WILL MY FUTURE BE?
EVERY MAN HAS ONE OPPORTUNITY. YOU'VE HAD TWO. YOU STARTED THE GAME ON SOME BOARD AND YOU CAN CONTINUE PLAYING. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
AM I SAVED?
YOU MUST BE FAITHFUL TO DESIRE. ONLY THIS. THERE IS NO OTHER SALVATION. GET OUT.
BUT, WHICH WAY?
ONLY DESIRE.
YES, DESIRE.

Epilogue

USUALLY, THE STORY ENDS WHEN SOMEONE CLOSES THE DOOR AND LEAVES.
THIS TIME, PERRAMUS OPENED IT TO ENTER, TO RETURN, LIKE SOMEONE LOOKING FOR A REMATCH AFTER LOSING THE GAME.
BUT LET'S BE THOROUGH.
THAT'S BETTER. IT ISN'T GOOD TO LEAVE FISSURES BETWEEN THIS SIDE AND THE OTHER, WITH SO MUCH COMING AND GOING. FINALLY, THE MATTER IS CONCLUDED.
YES, I KNOW THERE ARE SOME THINGS LEFT UNRESOLVED.
BUT THE STORY CONTINUES IN THE STORY OF THE OTHER SIDE.
AND THERE ARE PROMISING SOUNDS BEHIND THE DOOR.

PERRAMUS BOOK II
The Soul of the City

In Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting, the blind lead the blind. In the image, as in common knowledge, it's ruinous. In *Perramus* Book II, a historic blind man who is not fictional—Jorge Luis Borges—acts as a guide, and sets the group in motion when the weight of immediate reality has immobilized them. Fear, hatred, violence, helplessness, or compulsive vengeance are the faces of the die, one that the enemy proposes to use to play with life. The guide suggests leaving that game. There's an older battle, in another dimension, that can't be ignored.

The fight for the soul of Santa María isn't a heavenly or intangible business, however. Embodied in the memory, values, and emotions of the people, their salvation will be inseparable from the fate of those very beings who are without doubt unique, exemplary. They are the bearers of an infinite reality like the piles of a bridge across which everyone travels.

If Perramus's first adventure, or "departure," began from a sin, the mistake—or original sin—is transformed into a journey toward identity, the back-and-forth of proof and demonstration. This second installment has another theme: the problem is not one, but the others.

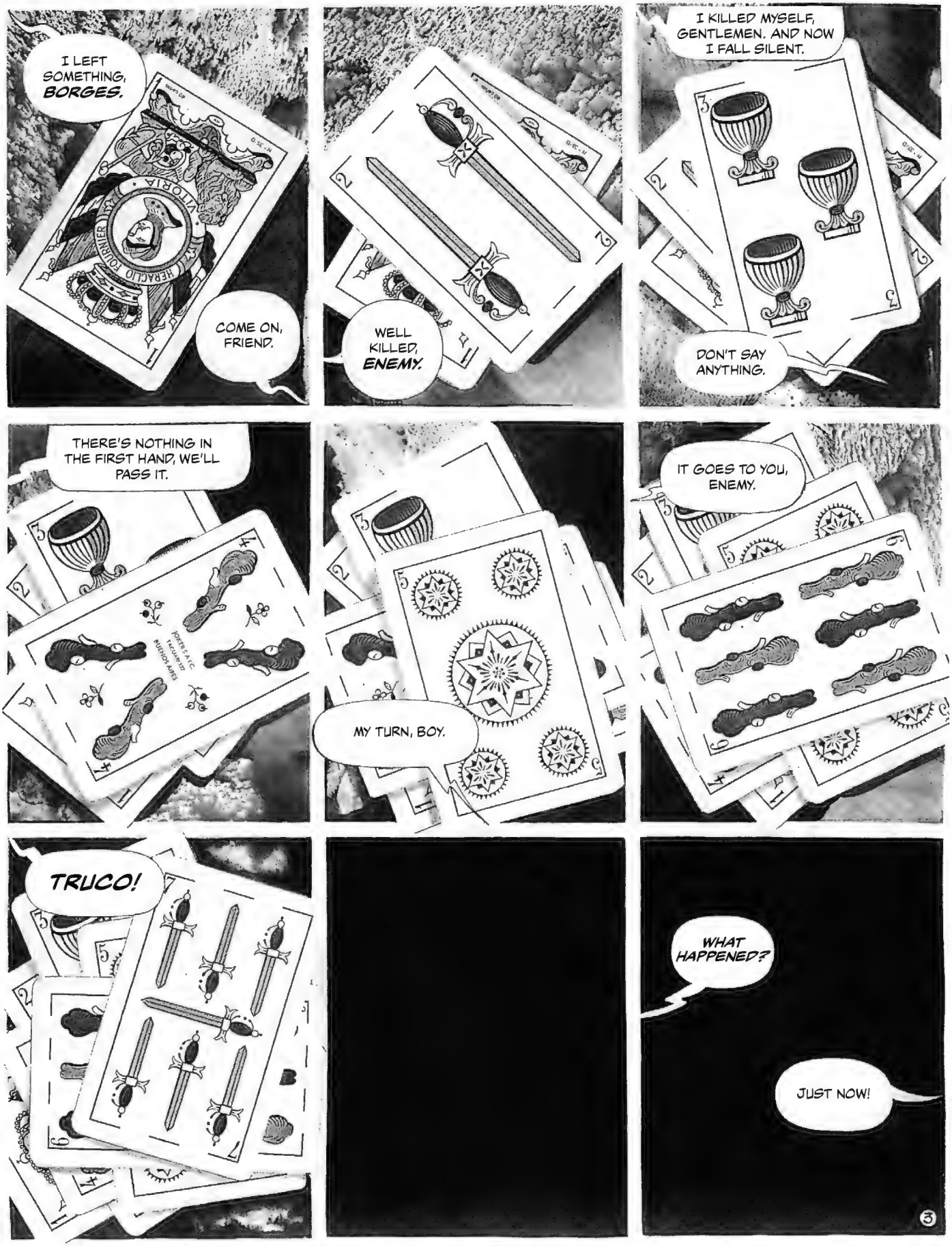
With or without paradox we sense that, in this task begun among a tangle of exterior symbols, the seeker of others will be found.

—**ALBERTO BRECCIA** and **JUAN SASTURAIN**

1 Change of Subject

WHAT ARE WE TO DO NOW, IN THE CITY OF THE MARSHALS?
"The city is like a map of my humiliations and failures."
WE HAVE TO ESCAPE IMMEDIATELY. WE SHOULD LEAVE NOW.
IT'S DANGEROUS. JUST STAY HERE. WE HAVE TO STAY STILL.
NO. THEY'LL COME LOOKING FOR US. WE HAVE TO FIGHT. WE HAVE TO FIND THEM AND FIGHT THEM.
YES, THAT. WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT AGAINST THEM.
TAKE HEED. IT'S BETTER TO WAIT HERE. SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
NO. IN THAT CASE, LET'S ESCAPE. IN REALITY, WHAT CAN WE DO AGAINST THEM? I THINK--
"it is not love that unites us, but fear."

"THAT IS WHY I LOVE HER SO MUCH."
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MAESTRO?
SANTA MARÍA-- AND LISTENING TO YOU REMINDS ME OF JAMES JOYCE.
HE WROTE: "WE CAN'T CHANGE THE COUNTRY. LET US CHANGE THE SUBJECT."
SHALL WE PLAY A CARD GAME?
YES, THAT. A GAME WILL DISTRACT US FROM THE OTHER GAME.
LET'S SEE... I'LL DISCARD.
LET'S PLAY TRUCO, SO IN PAIRS.
ME AND CANELONES AGAINST PERRAMUS AND THE MAESTRO.
2


I LEFT SOMETHING, BORGES.
COME ON, FRIEND.
WELL KILLED, ENEMY.
I KILLED MYSELF, GENTLEMEN. AND NOW I FALL SILENT.
DON'T SAY ANYTHING.
THERE'S NOTHING IN THE FIRST HAND, WE'LL PASS IT.
MY TURN, BOY.
IT GOES TO YOU, ENEMY.
TRUCO!
WHAT HAPPENED?
JUST NOW!
3

LOOK, THE WINDOW--
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CITY?
IT'S GONE... SANTA MARÍA IS GONE...
IT'S DISAPPEARING...
EH, WHAT'S GOING ON? AGAIN, WITH THE ETERNAUT--
NO, PERRAMUS. I KNOW OESTERHELD'S STORY VERY WELL. BUT THIS IS WORSE. MUCH WORSE.
RIIIIINNG!!
4

YES, I KNOW. I GOT THE SIGNAL. IT'S SERIOUS. WE HAVE TO REVIEW THE CHAIN. GOODBYE.
PERRAMUS, PICK UP THE CARDS, PLEASE.
YES.
ALL OF THEM.
THERE IT IS. THIS WAS THE LAST ONE.
THE LIGHT'S BACK ON.
THE CITY-- IT'S NORMAL AGAIN: IT'S REAPPEARED.
IN THIS BATTLE, IT'S NOT ONLY PEOPLE WHO ARE DISAPPEARED. YOU HAVE SEEN AN ATTEMPT TO DISAPPEAR THE CITY, ITSELF.
LIKE HIROSHIMA.
5

WORSE. THE BATTLE ISN'T FOR THE PHYSICAL CITY, LIKE BEIRUT OR HANOI. HERE, IT'S A FIGHT FOR THE SOUL OF SANTA MARÍA.
C'MON, MAESTRO. WHERE IS "THE SOUL" OF THE CITY?
SPREAD ALL AROUND, CANELONES. SPREAD IN THE FEELINGS, THE MEMORIES, THE THOUGHTS OF ITS INHABITANTS. IN EXACTLY SEVEN OF THEM. AS LONG AS THEY THINK AND FEEL, SANTA MARÍA CONTINUES TO EXIST. THERE ARE CITIES WHO LOSE THEIR SOUL--
AND NOW, THE MARSHALS ARE ATTACKING THERE, TOO. AT SOME POINT IN THE CHAIN, THE SOUL WAVERS. THIS SEVEN WAS A WARNING.
OF COURSE. THE CARD. BUT HOW DO WE PROTECT THE CITY? WHERE DO WE BEGIN?
AT THE BEGINNING, OBVIOUSLY. WE HAVE EXACTLY ONE WEEK, AND TOMORROW IS MONDAY.
WHO WARNED YOU? WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE FIGHT?
THAT'S UNIMPORTANT. LET'S CONTINUE, NOW. COULD YOU RESHUFFLE THE DECK, CANELONES? EVERYTHING FROM THE BEGINNING: ZERO TO ZERO.
6

2 The Moon (Monday)

DONG
IT'S TIME, GENTLEMEN. MONDAY IS UPON US AND THE SOUL OF SANTA MARÍA IS IN DANGER. THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE.
YOU, PERRAMUS-- DRAW A SIX-POINTED STAR ON THIS PAPER.
GOOD, LIKE THAT.
AND THERE.

GOOD. NOW, BACKLIT, WE CAN SEE THE FORM OF THE CHAIN.
IT WAS THE MAP OF SANTA MARÍA.
THESE ARE THE KEY POINTS, FRIENDS; WHERE THE VERY SOUL OF THE CITY IS SUSTAINED.
1
2
3
4
5
6
THAT'S WHERE THE PHILOSOPHERS LIVE?
ONE NEED NOT BE EXTREMELY IDEALISTIC TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT--IN THE SAME WAY THAT PHYSICAL THINGS AND BEINGS EXIST ONLY TO THOSE WHO SEE THEM--SO TOO THE SUBTLER ENTITIES EXIST WITHIN THOSE WHO THINK, FEEL, AND REMEMBER THEM.
AND WHO DOES THAT?
I ONCE EXPLAINED THAT WITH EVERY PERSON WHO DIES, IT'S NOT JUST THEIR BODY--BUT ALSO THEIR MEMORIES AND EVERYTHING THEY'VE POSSESSED. WHAT THEY'VE LOVED, WHAT THEY'VE FELT--
YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, CANELONES. YOU POSSESS MEMORIES AND FEELINGS THAT ARE YOURS ALONE AND THAT WILL DISAPPEAR WHEN YOU DO. EVERY PERSON, THOUGH THEY MAY NOT REALIZE IT, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A PIECE OF REALITY. AND THAT IS WHAT GIVES THEIR LIVES MEANING.
SO, WHERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SOUL OF SANTA MARÍA?
YOU'VE MARKED THE PLACE. WE HAVE TO FIND THEM AND PROTECT THEM, BECAUSE THE CITY IS IN DANGER. BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE FUNCTION THEY ARE SERVING.

AND THE FIRST IS IN THE CONSTITUCIÓN NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS IS THE CORNER.
THIS ONE.
COULD IT BE HER?
WHO IS THAT?
YOU DON'T KNOW? HER NAME IS DORA, BUT PEOPLE CALL HER LUNA BECAUSE SHE ONLY COMES OUT AT NIGHT-- SHE'S THE MOST FAMOUS AND CHEAPEST WHORE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
AH...
CAREFUL...
I'LL GO WITH HER. KEEP WATCH.
ASK HER--
3

DORA, YOUR NAME IS GREEK. IT MEANS "GIFT."
I KNOW. A SAILOR FROM THE PIRAEUS TOLD ME.
AND LOOK AT THE TWO GIFTS I HAVE. THEY'RE IN GOOD SHAPE. YOU COMING?
YES, LET'S GO.
SHOULD WE GO?
YES.
TONIGHT YOU'RE GOING TO SEE THE MOON. LET'S GO IN.
THEY'RE GOING IN.
4

ARE YOU VERY CHEAP, LUNA?
LET'S JUST SAY I LIKE WHAT I DO. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT LOVE, OF COURSE.
BUT THE NIGHT SCHOOL BOYS LEARN THEIR LESSONS WITH ME, OLD FRIENDS COME TO SEE ME, RETIREES--
I KNOW THEY COME BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE. THEY'RE ALONE.
AND...?
NOTHING'S HAPPENING?
YES, IT'S HAPPENING. HELP ME, LUNA.
LIKE THIS?
YES.
5

NO, BABY. TAKE THOSE.
500
SANTA MARIA CENTRAL BANK
12.026.035A
I DON'T WANT THOSE SOLDIERS HERE. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE, EVEN ON THE LARGE BILLS, THOSE ASSASSINS. TAKE THEM.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE CHEAP?
MAYBE. GIVE ME AN OLD BILL, OR SOME COINS WITH THAT LITTLE WHORE.
LITTLE WHORE?
YES. THE REPUBLIC OF THE OLDER BILLS. YOU NEVER NOTICED-- HOW IT'S LIKE SHE'S ALWAYS JUST GETTING OUT OF BED, TITS IN THE AIR? LIKE ME, SHE LIKES TO SHOW THEM OFF. THESE, ON THE OTHER HAND, THESE SONS OF--
KNOCK KNOCK
IT'S BEAUTIFUL. THEY'RE BOTH BEAUTIFUL. YOU ARE AND SHE IS, LUNA.
HIDE, HERE! TELL THEM TO COME IN.
6

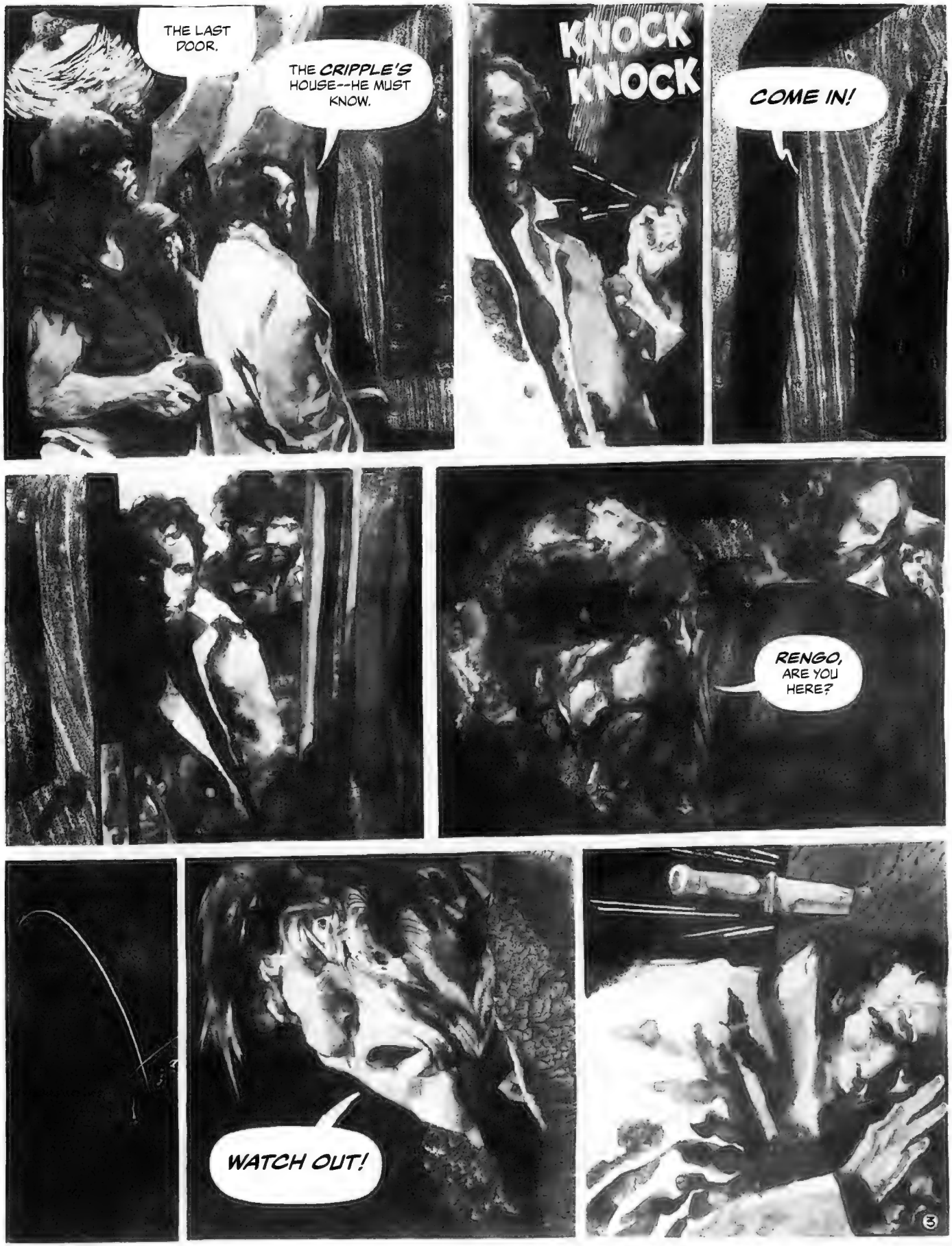
COME IN!
OUR CHARITY IS OVER. YOU OLD WHORE--
STOP THERE! THROW DOWN YOUR GUNS!
WATCH OUT!

WHAT DID THEY DO TO ME? THEY'VE NEVER SET FOOT IN HERE, THOSE--
FIRST, THIS SHIT. THEN, THEY THEMSELVES--
NOW I HAVE TO LEAVE HERE.
YES, IT'S FOR THE BEST.
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT TO ME.
IT'S A LOT.
NO, DON'T EXPLAIN IT. WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT WE'RE GOING TOGETHER.
IT'S ONLY A SAYING, THAT'S ALL.
8

3 The War

YOU CHOOSE
YES
THE MIDDLE OF THE POMPEII NEIGHBORHOOD...
OUR VERY OWN JOSÉ TUCCI LIVES HERE.
EXACTLY THE PLACE THE MARSHALS CHOOSE TO BEGIN THEIR CAMPAIGN IN THEIR PARODY OF AN ELECTION.
THEY'RE ALREADY BUILDING THE STAGE.
AND A HUGE POSTER WILL COVER THE ENTIRE BUILDING.
AND HERE, TOO, LIVES THE RETIREE. WE HAVE TO FIND HIM.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
PRESS.
VERY WELL, YOU MAY PASS.

YOU CHOOSE
YES or YES
NO. I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS. RENGO, THE CRIPPLE, WOULD KNOW.
A RETIREE? JOSÉ TUCCI? I DON'T KNOW HIM.
JOSÉ TUCCI, YOU SAID? NO. WHY DON'T YOU ASK RENGO, THE CRIPPLE?
I DON'T KNOW. YOU SHOULD ASK RENGO, THE CRIPPLE. HE'S LIVED HERE A LONG TIME.
THE SAME IS BETTER THAN THE WORST


THE LAST DOOR.
THE CRIPPLE'S HOUSE--HE MUST KNOW.
KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN!
RENGO, ARE YOU HERE?
WATCH OUT!
3

COME ON, YOU SONS OF BITCHES.
THE LIGHT. TURN ON THE LIGHT!!
WHAT'S GOING ON? IS THIS HOW YOU RECEIVE VISITORS, CRIPPLE?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ONES COMING TO FIND ME.
WHICH ONES?
THE MARSHALS AND THEIR HENCHMEN...
I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THIS BUILDING OF TRAITORS THAT DIDN'T AGREE TO PUTTING UP THAT POSTER, AND THEY HAVE ME MARKED. BUT I WON'T EXCHANGE LIGHT FOR MONEY.
IT'S OK, GRANDPA, YOU'RE A BEAST. BUT WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE: JOSÉ TUCCI, A RETIREE.
THAT'S ME.
4

I THOUGHT SO, CRIPPLE. AND I'M GLAD. BUT WE HAVE TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE. YOU'RE IN DANGER AND IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT NOTHING HAPPENS TO YOU.
I'M LIKE THE PLANTS. I ONLY NEED AIR AND LIGHT TO SURVIVE, AND THOSE SONS OF BITCHES STOLE IT FROM ME. I'M AT WAR WITH THEM.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, CRIPPLE?
"ONE NIGHT THEY CAME. THEY TOOK MY DAUGHTER AND MY SON-IN-LAW. I TRIED TO PROTECT HER--"
"THEY BEAT ME AND LEFT ME FOR DEAD."
SINCE THEN, WE'VE BEEN ALONE: HIM AND ME. ALONE, BUT AT WAR.
ALL RIGHT, VETERAN. BUT NOW YOU HAVE TO LEAVE: GATHER YOUR THINGS AND WE'LL GET OUT OF HERE. WHO KNOWS WHERE; IT DOESN'T MATTER.
WE CAN'T LEAVE NOW. I WOULD LIKE TO GO, SAY GOODBYE TO THE PLANTS, TO BREATHE FRESH AIR AND SEE THE SUN ON THE TERRACE. WHEN THIS NONSENSE IS OVER, WE'LL LEAVE.
OK. WE'LL BRING YOU UP.
5

YOU CAN'T COME UP.
I JUST WANT TO WATCH THE SHOW FROM HERE. I CAN'T GO DOWN. MY GRANDSON HAS TO WATER THE PLANTS.
VERY WELL, GO. BUT THE TERRACE IS CLOSED TO YOU.
SEE YOU LATER, CRIPPLE.
WE DEFEND THE CONTINUITY OF OPPRESSION UNDER THE SAME, CONSISTENTLY KNOWN BOOT.
THE MOVEMENT FROM BOOT TO SHOE SIGNIFIES NOT CHANGE BUT VARIATION. I PROMISE THE SAME OPPRESSION, AND NO OTHER.
CHOOSE BETWEEN YES AND YES, BETWEEN I AND ME, BETWEEN US. YOU ARE FREE TO CHOOSE THE FOOT.
6

THE BOOT, THE BOOT... IT LOOKS BUT DOES NOT SHOOT...
THE SHOE, THE SHOE IT STAYS, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO...
BOOT...
SHOE...
YOU CHOOSE
THE POSTER!
HELP!
WATCH OUT!
THERE'S A SABOTEUR UP THERE!
IT'S RENGO. LET'S GO!

TAKE THAT, SONS OF BITCHES!
RENGO!
YOU WON YOUR WAR, CRIPPLE.
A BATTLE, NOTHING MORE.
THE BOY-- SAVE HIM.
OF COURSE.
COME ON, QUICK!
I'M COMING. I'M COMING.
8

4 The Doll

* I LEARNED ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOOD / I LEARNED ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S BAD / I KNOW ABOUT THE KISS THAT YOU BUY / I KNOW ABOUT THE KISS THAT IS GIVEN ** OF THE FRIEND WHO IS A FRIEND / AS LONG AS IT SUITS / AND I KNOW THAT WITH A LOT OF MONEY / ONE IS WORTH MUCH MORE

MAKE ROOM, IDIOTS, AND STOP YOUR CRYING.
THE HOUR HAS ARRIVED FOR EVERY BEAST TO FEED.
AND HERE IS TOTO MARKET, WITH HIS TWICE-DAILY PROGRAM FOR THE DESPERATE. FIRST--
BREAD
YESSSS, BREAD!
BUT NOT FOR YOU, MISERABLES.
ONLY THOSE WHO ARE FREE CAN EARN IT THAT WAY, WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING.
BREAD
ALL THE BREAD IS YOURS! EAT! EAT!

BECAUSE YOU, POOR OF SPIRIT, YOU NEED SOMETHING ELSE.
CIRCUS
THIS!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MITHOS?
YES, MR. MARKET.
DO YOU WANT TO WORK, MITHOS?
NO, SIR.
DO YOU ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH?
NO, SIR.

BUT, WATCH OUT. NOW WE'RE HERE TO SELL.
EXACTLY. NOW WE'RE HERE TO LIE.
HERE, WE HAVE THESE BEAUTIFUL CAN OPENERS.
THAT ARE NEITHER BEAUTIFUL, NOR OPEN, OR CANS--
IT WORKS THIS WAY.
DON'T.
DON'T WHAT?
DON'T WORK.
DON'T WORK WHAT?
THE SALE. NO ONE BELIEVES--
DOES ANYONE THINK THAT THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL CAN OPENER?
4

NOOOOOOO!
BUT IT IS VERY GOOD. IT PIERCES ALL TYPES OF METAL SURFACES: CANS, BOTTLE CAPS, SAUCEPANS.
CHAMBER POTS--
THOSE, TOO.
AND HELMETS?
HELMETS?
WE NEED HELMET OPENERS, NOT CAN OPENERS.
WHAT HELMETS DO YOU MEAN, MITHOS?
THOSE.
CAREFUL, TOTO...
5

WHAT IS THIS YOU'RE SELLING?
THESE BEAUTIFUL CAN OPENERS THAT--
HELMET OPENERS--
QUIET, MITHOS, YOU'LL GET ME IN TROUBLE.
HELMET OPENERS.
WE'LL TEST IT OUT. IF YOU'RE LYING, WE'LL TAKE YOU FOR FRAUD.
IT DON'T WORK.
HOW ABOUT THIS OTHER ONE.
IT DON'T WORK.
THIS ONE WILL WORK, I'M SURE OF IT--
6

IT WORKS LIKE THIS!
GET BACK!
GET THEM!
WHY, MITHOS?
WHY, WHAT?
7

IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE CAN OPENERS.
IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE BREAD--
IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUS--
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
NOTHING. I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
8

Don Juan

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HERE.
IT IS. CHECK THE MAP.
THIS IS THE FOURTH POINT OF THE SECOND TRIANGLE. IT HASN'T FAILED US YET.
PRISON
THE PLACE, YES. BUT HOW COULD THIS MAN BE THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR? THE MAESTRO--
÷SHHHHT.÷
YES LADIES AND GENTLEMEN VIEWERS, WE ARE ONCE AGAIN IN FREESTYLE COMPETITION. THE PINNACLE OF CREATIVITY IN THE ERA OF THE MARSHALS--
AND WE PRESENT, THIS TIME, AN UNPRECEDENTED SEXUAL CHALLENGE!
A MAN, THE VETERAN LETCH, ANIBAL "PHALLUS" TOLEDO, THE ACROBAT OF CARAZA, NOTORIOUS IN DECADES PAST.
--WILL ATTEMPT, IN THE SPAN OF HALF AN HOUR, WITH DIFFERENT WOMEN--
AND WITHOUT ANY VIOLENCE-- A MINIMUM OF--
SIX CONSECUTIVE COUPLINGS!!
FOR EACH COUPLING EXCEEDING THAT FIGURE, PHALLUS WILL WIN ONE YEAR OFF THE SENTENCE OF HIS IMPRISONED PEERS.

AND SO OUR CAMERAS ARE SET UP IN THE COURTYARD OF THE VILLA DEVOTO PRISON, THE SETTING OF THE CHALLENGE NOW ABOUT TO COMMENCE. RIGHT HERE--
OUR MICROPHONES WILL REGISTER EVERY DETAIL. OUR CAMERAS WILL MISS NOTHING.
LET'S GO, PHALLUS, OLD MAN!
C'MON PHALLUS! C'MON PHALLUS!
LISTEN TO THOSE STANDS. AND HERE IS THE CHALLENGER!
WHAT'S OUR FRIEND DOING WITH HIM? IF HE'S AN OLD RAPIST--WHY?
2

THAT'S NOT HARD. "PHALLUS" IS A CHILDHOOD HERO OF CANELONES. HE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP HIM DURING THE CHALLENGE. AND HE'S NOT A RAPIST--
NONE OF THE CHICKS EVER COMPLAINED ABOUT HIM. THE LAST ONE SCREAMED, BUT FROM PLEASURE. AND WHAT THEY WERE DOING WITH HIM--
AND NOW, WE BEGIN THE SERIES OF SIX WOMEN CHOSEN FOR THE CHALLENGER. WE'RE SECOOOONDS AAAAWAAAAAY!
NUMBER ONE. RITA!
UUUUUHHH!
1
DON'T LOOK AT HER FACE, PHALLUS!
DON'T STOP! HURRY, HURRY!

AAAH
AAAH
YEEEEEESSSS!
THEY CHOSE AN UGLY OLD WOMAN.
THEY DON'T WANT HIM TO DO IT.
AND NOW-- AMANDA!
2
AAH AAH
AAAH
AAAH
C'MON, PHALLUS, C'MON!
THE THIRD CHALLENGE WILL BE-- MIMI!
4

SHE'S A BROOM-STICK!
THERE'S NOTHING TO HOLD ONTO!
3
AND HARDLY ANY HOLE!
AAAHH
AAAHH
AND NOW THEY'VE CHOSEN A LITTLE PERSON.
4
AHH
TO THE AMPUTEE, PHALLUS! NO HESITATION, PHALLUS!
5
THE WOMAN THEY CALL MAD...
6

AAAAA!
IT'S AMAZING. AN OLD WOMAN, A FAT WOMAN, A SKINNY WOMAN, A LITTLE WOMAN, AN AMPUTEE WOMAN, AND HE ENDS WITH THE WOMAN THEY CALLED MAD. SO MANY WOMEN, PHALLUS...
AND HE HAS FIVE MINUTES LEFT TO ADD TO HIS WINNINGS.
WHAT WILL THEY HAVE FOR HIM NEXT, THOSE SONS OF BITCHES? A DEAD WOMAN?
7
GET HARD! NOW IT'S EASY, PHALLUS!
6

DING
FAGGOT!!!

EXPLAIN THIS TO ME, PERRAMUS. IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY.
THEORY 1: IT'S A FETISH. HE ONLY WANTS TO BE WITH EXTREMES, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT--CONVENTIONAL BEAUTY INHIBITS HIM.
NO.
THEORY 2: THE LAST WOMAN WAS HIS OWN DAUGHTER THAT THEY CHOSE WITHOUT HIM KNOWING, BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT HIM TO DO THIS.
NO.
THEORY 3: "PHALLUS" TOLEDO IS A FAKE AND THIS WHOLE FARCE WAS PUT ON FOR THE RATINGS, SELLING THE IMAGE OF A FAKE DEMOCRACY.
NO.
DEFINITELY NOT.
THEORY 4: "PHALLUS" TOLEDO FELL IN LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME. "HE KNEW" THAT THE RIFFRAFF CHEERING HIM ON HAD NEVER LOVED. THAT ONE THING WASN'T WORTH THE OTHER, ONE GESTURE FOR ANOTHER.
YES.
8

The Symbol

SANTA MARIA
Zoo
WHY DID WE COME HERE ON A FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MAESTRO?
AS BEFORE. WE HAVE TO RESCUE SOMEONE WHO HOLDS PART OF THE SOUL OF THE CITY. THE FIFTH, TO BE EXACT.
AND WE'LL FIND THEM HERE?

LOOK AT THE POINT OF THE STAR. IT'S ON THE ZOO, EXACTLY.
AMONG SCREAMING CHILDREN, EXHAUSTED MOTHERS, SADISTIC WARDENS, AND STUPID OR PRIMPING ANIMALS?
THERE ISN'T MUCH WORTH SAVING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
IT'S TRUE: CREATING A ZOO IS AN ABOMINABLE ACT ETHICALLY. APPROPRIATING THE LIFE OF ANOTHER BEING FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENTERTAINMENT--
--BUT THE CRUELTY IS FAR LESS THAN THE ARROGANCE OF UNDERTAKING A LIMITLESS TASK: THE SPECIES, LIKE BOOKS OR POSSIBLE SINS, ARE INFINITE, AND... BUT WHAT IS THIS?
A

WHAT IS IT? THE WORST. THE LATEST IDEA FROM THE MARSHALS...
COME AND SEE, FELLOW CITIZENS! TODAY IS THE CULMINATION OF THE EXHIBIT "SEARCHING FOR THE SYMBOL OF THE NEW FATHERLAND."
COME AND SEE! HERE WE HAVE, IN THE NEW SANTA MARÍA COMPLETE ZOO, THE EMBLEMATIC ANIMALS THAT COMPETE FOR THE HONOR OF BEING THE SYMBOL THAT PRESIDES OVER THE NEW COAT OF ARMS. COME, CITIZENS.
WHAT IMBECILES! SYMBOLS COME FROM TIME AND FROM THE PEOPLE. THEY CAN'T DO A COMPETITION FOR IT LIKE A LOGO OR A BRAND. LET'S GO.
YES, LET'S GO. HERE THERE IS NOTHING TO DO, OR SAVE.

IF THEY INVITE US TO CHOOSE--
WE CHOOSE.
THEY'VE MOBILIZED THE WHOLE WORLD, THESE SONS OF BITCHES.
LOOK, THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE OF THE THIRD WORLD.
SLOW AND STEADY
THE CONCEPT OF SAFETY AND SLOW EFFICIENCY: STEP BY STEP TOWARD DEVELOPMENT.
THIS IS THE WINNING MODEL. DEAR LOSERS: TO BUILD A NATION YOU HAVE TO HAVE AN IMPERIAL MINDSET, AND SHE HAS IT.
POWER AND GREED
THE MODEST CHARM OF IMPERIAL CYNICISM--

AND THE LITTLE DOVE WORKS FOR EVERYTHING.
LET THE AMBASSADOR OF PEACE FLY OVER YOUR SKY. BROTHERS, FROM ABOVE YOU CAN RECEIVE FORGIVENESS AND INDULGENCE, FOR A FIXED PRICE.
BLESSINGS FROM ABOVE
UNITED AND DOMINANT
A GOOD LATIN AMERICAN MODEL. RECENT HISTORY SUPPORTS US. THE GORILLA CRUSHES AND DEVOURS, BUT HE IS OURS.
THESE ARE THE MOST FOLKLORIC SYMBOLS YET.
AND THIS WILL TAKE THE CAKE: A PROP BEAST FOR A PROP GOVERNMENT.
LET ME BITE INTO YOUR ECONOMY, AND YOUR COAT OF ARMS, SANTA MARÍAÑOS. YOU'LL HAVE THE FIRST BESTSELLER COUNTRY-- A MONSTROUS, DEVOURING COUNTRY. LET ME BITE.
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BIGGER EVERY TIME
5

BUT CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY THESE GUYS ARE INTERESTED?
IT'S SIMPLE: THE MARSHALS WHO HAVE BETRAYED THE COUNTRY ARE NOW SELLING THE SHIELD IN THE NATIONAL COAT OF ARMS, LIKE AD SPACE. WHO WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED IN PROMOTING THEIR PRODUCT OR IDEOLOGY?
LOOK: EVEN THE SO-CALLED BRILLIANT ADVERSARIES OF THE REGIME ARE PLAYING THE MARSHALS' GAME.
POE
THE RAVEN IS OURS
POE IS THE SYMBOL
THE R
COCKROACH OR NOTHING
ON THE SHIELD
KAFKA
ON THE SHIELD
THE COCKROACH, OR YOU'RE A TRAITOR!
YELL POE, OR I'LL SMASH YOUR TEETH IN!
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME WITH THOSE IMBECILES.
6

ONE BIRD LESS--
ACK
--AND THIS FILTH.
THERE'S NOTHING TO SAVE HERE. NOT EVEN A DECENT ANIMAL.
LET'S GO BACK.
SALIDA
THERE THEY ARE, AT THE BAR.
WE FAILED. I WAS RIGHT: THERE'S NOTHING TO SAVE, MAESTRO.

AND WHO DID YOU BRING WITH YOU?
A CAT, SOLO, FOLLOWED.
SOLO--
SO MUCH INDIFFERENCE. EH, "SOLO."
NO ONE SAID WE WERE LOOKING FOR A PERSON.
THERE ARE EXEMPLARY ATTITUDES WHERE WE LEAST EXPECT THEM. IN THIS CASE, A COMMENDABLE INDIFFERENCE.
BUT YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT. EH, "SOLO?"

7 The Goal

TO LINIERS.
LET'S GO TO LINIERS!
TO GO TO LINIERS, TAKE THE FREEWAY.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE IN LINIERS.
LINIERS
QUEEN AND TAPALQUE BAR
NEW CHI

WHAT TIME DOES THE GAME START?
FIVE MINUTES.
TODAY THE SELECT, DISCIPLINED OFFICIAL TEAM PLAYS ITS LAST MATCH BEFORE THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AGAINST THE WINNERS OF NATIONAL B DIVISION, NEW CHICAGO. CAN YOU HEAR ME, RECHAZETTI?
YESSIR. PROUD TO CAPTAIN THIS TEAM, AND SHOW OFF THE RESULTS OF OUR DISCIPLINE TO MAKE THE COUNTRY PROUD.
AND NOW, THE NEW CHICAGO LOCKER ROOM. PÉREZ?
HERE. VERY PROUD TO PLAY AGAINST THIS DISCIPLINED TEAM, THE VERY IMAGE OF A COUNTRY UNITED BEHIND A GOAL.
EXACTLY. CAN YOU HEAR ME, MARSHAL, IN THE BOX SEATS?
2

YES, OFFICIAL ANNOUNCER. I CONGRATULATE THESE YOUNG MEN FOR PUTTING ASIDE ANARCHIC AND INDIVIDUALISTIC PRACTICES, THE MOTHERS OF DEFEAT, AND UNDERSTANDING THAT VICTORY IS THE RESULT.
OF STRICT DISCIPLINE, MARSHAL.
OF EXHAUSTIVE PLANNING, SIR.
THE POWER OF THE TEAM, EXCELLENCY.
THE OBSEQUIENCE! OUR MAN WILL BE AMONG THE PLAYERS?
IT'LL BE EASIER TO FIND HIM THIS TIME. LISTEN.
MONDAY, IT WAS DORA. TUESDAY, RENGO. AND THEN MITHOS, PHALLUS, SOLO...
THE MUSICAL SCALE. TODAY CORRESPONDS TO LA...
LISTEN TO THE ANNOUNCER...
...ACEVEDO, TORRES, AND FLORIAN...
NONE WITH "LA."

IT'S A SHIT TEAM. RIGID, WITHOUT CREATIVITY, WITHOUT OUR TRADITIONAL FLAIR.
AND THE GAME BEGINS. NATIONAL TEAM ON THE OFFENSE. ROSSI QUICKLY BREAKS TO THE RIGHT.
"HE REACHES MIDFIELD, HERE COMES THE CENTERRRRR--"
GOOAL!
STRENGTH AND COORDINATION FOR ONE CLEAR OBJECTIVE: TO SCORE A GOAL FOR THE GLORY OF THE FATHERLAND. GALÍNDEZ SHOOTS, AND--
GOAL!
"TORRES BLOCKS GALÍNDEZ. ROSSI ON THE REBOUND, TAKES THE SHOT, AND--"
GOOAL!
IT'S ENRAGING HOW EASY THIS IS.

RAMÍREZ, OFF THE HEAD AND-- GOOOAL.
THEY'RE DOWN FIVE. IT'S OVER, BOYS.
13
7
NEW CHICAGO SIGNALS A CHANGE.
NUMBER 7, SOLARI, IS OUT. HERE COMES NUMBER 13, SATURNO.
THREE MINUTES LEFT, AND SATURNO IS JUST WHAT THEY NEED. HE'S GOING TO TRY AN INDIVIDUAL MANEUVER.
"HE ELUDES GROSSO."
"THE YOUNG MAN FEINTS. HE'S THROUGH--"

"HE'S ON HIS OWN, KEEPS ADVANCING, HE SLIPS BETWEEN THOSE TWO, STOPS."
USELESS PLAYS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. HE ELUDES RIVOIRO--
"MAKES IT TO THE PENALTY BOX."
"SATURNO IS IN FRONT OF THE GOALIE--"
"--HE FEINTS AND ELUDES HIM."
DON'T DO IT!
"HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT..."
NO... WAIT, JUST FEINT...
"HE'S DELAYED, HE'S GOING TO SHOOT, HE'S GOING TO SHOOOOOT--"
AND THE GAME IS OVER!!

WHAT A SHAME!!
THAT'S HIM, FOR SURE. LET'S GO.
THE AUTHORITIES CONGRATULATE THE PLAYERS ON A SOLID AND EFFICIENT OFFICIAL GAME.
GIVE US A STATEMENT, SATURNO.
LOCKER ROO
THOSE AREN'T JOURNALISTS. LOOK.
HEY! YOU GUYS...
WHAT DID THEY SAY TO YOU, SATURNO?
LALO.

ABATTOIRS
FOUR TO ABATTOIRS.
HERE, YOU WON IT. IT'S YOURS.
THANKS.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE THE SHOT? DID YOU KNOW?
I DIDN'T WANT TO. IT WAS WHAT THEY EXPECTED. I JUST WANTED TO BEAT THEM, NOT SCORE A GOAL. BUT I COULD'VE, HUH?
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
OF COURSE, LALO.

8 The Fallen

AND NOW, MAESTRO?
WE'VE COMPLETED THE LITTLE STAR, AND WE'RE MISSING THE SEVENTH PERSON. WHERE DO WE GO TO FIND HIM?
A LONG TIME AGO, I WROTE A STORY IN WHICH A POLITICAL PROBLEM RESOLVED ACCORDING TO A CERTAIN GEOMETRIC ORDER. GIVEN THREE POINTS, YOU CAN DEDUCE THE FOURTH.
THE FIGURE OF A RHOMBUS TOOK SHAPE, THAT--
"DEATH AND THE COMPASS," RIGHT?
YES.
BUT AT THE END OF THE STORY, THE INVESTIGATOR DOESN'T JUST DISCOVER THE PATTERN. HE'S TRANSFORMED INTO THE FOURTH VICT--
THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

THE CONTENT DOESN'T MATTER, PERRAMUS. I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN THE FORM THAT CAN BE DEDUCED. WHICH IS THE POINT THAT COMPLETES THE FIGURE?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
TAKE THIS. DEDUCE FOR YOURSELF WHERE WE'LL FIND THE FINAL NAME TODAY, SUNDAY.
AS FOR THAT, THERE'S SOMETHING SURE: EACH NAME CORRESPONDS WITH A MUSICAL NOTE. TODAY, WE PLAY THE TI.
BUT THE NAMES, THE LAST NAMES, ALSO RELATE TO THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.
EXCEPT SOLO, WHO DOESN'T HAVE A LAST NAME. LOOK.
onday Dora The moon
Tuesday Rengo Tucci
Wednesday Mithos Ware
Thursday Phallus Toledo
Friday Solo
Saturday Lalo Saturno
Sunday Ti
TWO GOOD REFERENCES. BUT WE'RE MISSING THE PLACE. NOW...
2

NO.
THIS IS STUPID. IDIOTIC COINCIDENCES. WE'RE WASTING TIME WITH SOME CHILDISH GAME WHILE THE MARSHALS DO WHATEVER THEY WANT IN REALITY. TAKE IT BACK: I'M NOT PLAYING ANYMORE.
PERRAMUS.
IT WAS FORESEEABLE, AT THIS POINT, SOME BETRAYAL. BUT, LET'S CONTINUE.
I BELIEVE THE FINAL KEY IS TO UNIFY ALL THE POINTS OF THE STAR, LIKE THIS.
HERE: PLAZA ESCONDIDA. A LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK.
LINIERS
DEVOTO
NEW POMPEYA
PALERMO
CONSTITUCION
RETIRO
3

THERE'S NO ONE HERE.
LET'S SEE WHAT THE PLACE IS CALLED. MAYBE--
NO NEED TO WAIT. WE'RE SITTING HERE, BEFORE THE MONUMENT TO THE RENEGADE.
THE RENE-GADE?
AHA! THAT THERE IS RICHARD TILVER SUNDAY, DOUBLY A RENEGADE. WHO, I'M SURE, ISN'T RECORDED IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.
NO...
4

"Son of English merchants, he grew up in colonial Santa María, idealizing his fatherland. And so, when the British invaders arrived in 1806, he didn't hesitate to collaborate with them."
"It cost him dearly: during the Reconquest, the American-born, cultural Spaniards were hard on him and he was imprisoned as a traitor. He was pardoned by the Assembly in the year 1813, but the stigma of treason forced him to move away from the city."
"Soon taken by the spirit of the country, he joined the rebel gauchos and participated significantly in the civil wars, seen from the federal side by the city politicians as his second treason."
"Linked to Rosas during the thirties, he would die, like the brave man he always was, fighting against the flags of the empires that tried to forcibly navigate upriver in November, 1845."
"He was one of the last men standing in the battle of Vuelta de Obligado. And so, he was commemorated with this bust, as "The Renegade," Richard Tilver Sunday, one who chose, in the end, the homeland and the flags he would die for."
5

BUT THIS SUNDAY, ISN'T HE--?
WHY TELL US THIS WHOLE STORY, MAESTRO?
BUT THIS ISN'T--
THE BEHAVIOR OF HEROES IS AN EXAMPLE IN BOTH GREAT DEEDS AND WEAKNESSES. THAT'S WHY--
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU DOING, LISTENING TO THIS OLD STORYTELLER?
HOW'D YOU FIND US?
BY DEDUCTION. BUT I GOT FURTHER THAN YOU. I KNOW WHO THE MARSHALS ARE LOOKING FOR. THE SEVENTH MAN IS--
HIM!!
IN "DEATH AND THE COMPASS," THE HUNTER IS THE VICTIM. FURTHERMORE, I DISCOVERED THAT IN 1945 HE DROPPED HIS LAST NAME, DOMINGO, SUNDAY IN SPANISH, SO AS NOT TO SHARE IT WITH A COLONEL, WHO...
THAT'S AN INTERESTING URBAN LEGEND, BUT UNTRUE.
AND THERE'S ANOTHER CLUE, MAESTRO. LISTEN: DORA EMBODIES LUST; TUCCI (TOUCHY), WRATH; WARE, GREED; TOLEDO (TO EAT), GLUTTONY; "SOLO," SLOTH; LALO (MEANS "RICH GUARDIAN"), ENVY... WHAT'S LEFT?
PRIDE!! THE MOST SERIOUS CAPITAL SIN, THAT OF THE FALL. AND WHO BUT THE MAESTRO INCARNATES ARROGANT PRIDE IN INTELLIGENCE. HE'S CAPABLE OF ARRANGING EVERYTHING, EVEN HANDING OVER HIS LIFE TO THE ENEMY, AND WITH WITNESSES. BUT WE WON'T LET HIM.
6

BUT WE WON'T LET HIM.
THAT'S NO MORE THAN A WELL-CONSTRUCTED STORY.
LOOK OUT! HERE THEY COME!
COVER THE MAESTRO!
DROP THE GUN, CANELONES. IT CAN MAKE SUCH A MESS.
THEY'RE COMING OVER.

YOU SEE, PERRAMUS?
WHO IS IT?
TILVER SUNDAY, THE RENEGADE.
SUNDAY-- AND WE LET THEM.
THEY ONLY DESTROYED A SYMBOL. AS FOR REAL PRIDE, I DON'T BELIEVE THEY'LL EVER HAVE IT.
I WAS RIGHT, EH?
BUT... IS THE CITY SAVED?
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO EXPLAIN IT TO ME?
8

Epilogue

VIVA PERON
DEATH TO PERON
WHAT WOULD HE EXPLAIN? THAT'S WHAT THE MAESTRO IS ABOUT. IT'S YOUR JOB...
IF THE SOUL OF THE CITY IS SAVED? MAYBE SO. THOUGH, THE ISSUE ALWAYS SEEMED STRANGE TO ME.
LOOK. LOOK AT THEM.
THEY'RE TWO OF A KIND.
ONE JUSTIFIES THE OTHER, THE OTHER EXPLAINS TO THE FIRST--
LISTEN, AMIGO: THIS HAS TO STOP. NO MORE.
INDEED. THE NEXT ADVENTURE IS CALLING US.
EH? WHAT'S THAT?
LET'S GET GOING.

The first adventure, or misadventure, of Perramus—"The Pilot of Oblivion"—was conceived during 1982, and primarily composed in that year and the next. It told the story of the protagonist, a desperate man who chose—and his wish granted—to forget in order to escape an unbearable guilt. That excessive and fantastic fantasy unfolded in the phantasmal city of Santa María, ruled by the paradigmatic Marshals. The circular path of Perramus took after The Fallen sent him far away from Santa María in order to finally return, and far away from himself in order to recover anew. This interior and exterior voyage, the story itself, was deeply marked by its historical context: and both the political and the personal context of those who created the adventure. Those contexts, nevertheless, despite being so strong, do not exhaust the meaning. Rather, they open it, something that the following adventures have tried to demonstrate.

Throughout the first installment of *Perramus*, the protagonist met those who would become his companions from then on: the blunt Canelones, a black Uruguayan worker; and the solitary aviator, Ezekiel Gorriti, turned by the grotesque despot Mr. Whitesnow into "The Enemy" needed for his regime. But it wasn't until the final adventure, when Perramus looks for and finds Borges—a Borges both historical and imagined, some kind of answer or key to his fate—that the story turned a corner and began the adventure that would no longer be about the lone Perramus, but the four of them.

The second adventure—"The Soul of the City," completed in 1984—involved Borges as a major protagonist, since it is he who proposes the singular fight in which the oppressors and the adventurers compete for the spirit of Santa María, incarnated in the anonymous owners of certain values that sustain it. In some ways, Perramus's quest ends there symbolically; at the same time, it's transposed into the dark historical character "The Renegade," one of the souls the assassins intend to destroy . . . In rescuing others, he will be found.

In the stories of Perramus—as in history itself—all victory is ambiguous and provisional. Perhaps because of this, it's no coincidence that the beginning of the third part, "The Island of Guano," doubles down on fiction as a way to conjure and neutralize the blows of so-called reality. Not only does the previous adventure come into existence through a Borges text, the parodically titled *Fricciones*, but through him, the great author overlooked by the Swedish Academy, who awards the Nobel.

Written and drawn between 1986 and 1987, "The Island of Guano" begins with Borges in Geneva, and ends when the Maestro had returned to the city indefinitely. It's likely that his ironic reflexive appearance at the end, especially the conversations with his charismatic counterpart Uncle Galapagos, have to do with that circumstance of closure and ideological testament.

PERRAMUS BOOK III
The Island of Guano

Demarcated between two ceremonies —one of imaginary justice, and the other a suspicious and unpredictable baptism—"The Island of Guano" is a device, an unwanted staircase in the return to Santa María where the regime of the Marshals is dissolved but is still causing damage. In the first place, clearly, the quartet happen to be more witness than protagonist in a grotesque and excessive fable, humorless. The farcical tone cannot and does not attempt to ignore obvious issues: the choice between a circus-like country and a country of shit is dramatic—but like in the old serial novels, the adventure always continues and the carnality of the protagonists is never in doubt. In the end, as the gaucho philosopher Inodoro Pereyra said, "There's always the possibility that while others make history, we make comics."

—**JUAN SASTURAIN**, Barcelona, 1993

Prologue with Prize

ALFRED
THE MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ACADEMY OF LETTERS ARE GATHERED HERE TO FINALLY DO JUSTICE.
3
ALFRED
TO RECOGNIZE THE LITERARY WORK OF AN EXCEPTIONAL CREATOR, LARGELY MARGINALIZED DUE TO IDEOLOGICAL AND OTHER MISTAKES.
AND SO, THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR THIS YEAR IS AWARDED, UNANIMOUSLY, TO MISTER JORGE LUIS BORGES.
WE RECOGNIZE ALL OF HIS WORK, BUT ABOVE ALL, A RECENT IMAGINATIVE COLLECTION OF SEVEN STORIES: FRICCIONES--
--IN WHICH THE ARGENTINE WRITER MARRIES HIS PROVERBIAL STYLE TO REFERENCES, OBLIQUE THOUGH THEY MAY BE, TO THE REALITY OF HIS COUNTRY.
WE ATTEND, TOO, TO THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF THE ENIGMATIC PERRAMUS, THE ROUGH CANELONES, AND THE PARADOXICAL ENEMY.
THEY ALL EMERGED FROM AN UNBOUNDED IMAGINATION.

HOW MUCH LONGER?
QUIET. THE MAESTRO IS SPEAKING.
--AND IF USUALLY THE CHARACTERS EXIST DUE TO AND ARE DETERMINED BY THE AUTHOR'S WRITING, IN THE CASE OF MY FRICCIONES, THE SO-CALLED CHARACTERS HAVE MARKED FOREVER HE WHO HAS BEEN, BY ACCIDENT, THE MERE AUTHOR.
WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLITICAL REGIME OF THE MARSHALS, WHO NOW SEEMS WILLING TO DEMOCRATIZE SANTA MARÍA?
LOOK, I USED TO BE WORRIED ABOUT GOVERNMENTS THAT DISAPPEARED BOOKS FROM THE SHELVES. THEN I REALIZED IT WAS MORE SERIOUS TO DISAPPEAR READERS FROM THEIR HOUSES.
WILL YOU STAY IN EUROPE OR RETURN TO YOUR HOMELAND?
IN ANOTHER ERA, I FELT LIKE A EUROPEAN EXPAT IN SANTA MARÍA. TODAY, I KNOW THAT A HOMELAND IS ALSO A FEELING, AND THE FRIENDS THAT ARE WITH ME TAUGHT ME THAT A "HOMELAND" IS NOT JUST THE PLACE ONE IS BORN, BUT THE PLACE TO WHICH YOU WANT TO RETURN.
LET'S GO, GUYS.
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF THIS SUIT.
DID YOU LIKE STOCKHOLM, CANELONES?
TOO MANY BLONDES.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE TRIP HOME, ENEMY.

1 Whitesnow Revisited

EXIT
THERE I AM.
YOU LIKE IT?
YES. ALTHOUGH IT'S WEIRD TO SEE YOURSELF TURNED INTO A CHARACTER. CAN'T SLEEP?
J.L. BORGES
FICCIONES

IN TWO HOURS WE'LL BE IN SANTA MARÍA, AND I'M AFRAID THAT THEY WILL DO SOMETHING TO THE MAESTRO--
--THAT "MAESTRO" WON'T BE ME.
THE MARSHALS WON'T SIT IDLY BY AFTER THEIR DECLARATIONS.
STILL, AS THINGS ARE, I DON'T THINK THAT--
MISTER BORGES. THE CAPTAIN INVITES YOU TO THE CABIN TO CELEBRATE YOUR AWARD.
VERY WELL, THANK YOU.
I THOUGHT PILOTS ONLY READ ARTHUR HAILEY. HA.

LOOK WHAT IT SAYS HERE...
ENEMY, BORGES HASN'T RETURNED.
I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR HIM.
WHERE IS BORGES?
ANSWER ME!
HE'S HERE. LOOKS LIKE HE'S SLEEPING.
5

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
BANG

L--LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. UH... THE CAPTAIN ASKS THAT YOU REMAIN IN YOUR SEATS AND REMAIN CALM. IT'S JUST AN AIR POCKET, NORMAL AT THIS ALTITUDE.
EXIT
YOU OK?
YEAH. GRAZED MY RIBS. BUT THE OLD MAN WILL BE OUT A WHILE.

WHAT NOW? WE CAN'T GO BACK TO SANTA MARÍA. THEY'LL BE WAITING.
I'LL TAKE OVER. THERE'S A WAY OUT.
MR. WHITESNOW'S ISLAND.
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO THAT ISLAND?
I DON'T KNOW THAT I WANT TO. BUT THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING. TELL THE PASSENGERS.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: DUE TO A TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE SANTA MARÍA AIRPORT WE'VE BEEN REDIRECTED TO MR. WHITESNOW'S ISLAND, WHERE THEY ARE READY TO RECEIVE US.
8

THEY KNOW WE'RE COMING, ENEMY?
YES, AND THEY'RE WAITING FOR US.
FOREIGN PRESS
EVERYTHING'S READY, SEÑOR WHITESNOW.
EVERY-THING'S READY, SEÑOR WHITE-SNOW.
EVERYTHING'S READY, SEÑOR WHITESNOW.
GOOD, GOOD. WE'RE ONLY MISSING THE CHORUS.
THAT'S READY, TOO.

SEÑOR WHITESNOW, WILL YOU LET ME THROUGH?
WILL THEY IMPRISON US ON THE ISLAND?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT I DON'T THINK WE'LL GET AWAY SCOT-FREE.
THEY WILL COME THROUGH, THEY WILL COME THROUGH, BUT THE LAST ONE WILL STAY.
AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS
10

LET'S HOPE NOTHING HAPPENS.
THEY WILL COME THROUGH, THEY WILL COME THROUGH, BUT THE LAST ONE WILL STAY. ♫
SEEMS LIKE EVERY-THING'S GOING FINE.
COME, COME. THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU.
YOU LIKE THE ISLAND?
TOO MANY BLACK PEOPLE.

2 The Secret Circus

AS PRESIDENT-FOR-LIFE I EXTEND OUR WELCOME TO YOU, SEÑOR BORGES. ARE YOU HAPPY TO FIND YOURSELF ON OUR ISLAND?
I'M HAPPY TO BE OFF THAT PLANE. BUT I AM BOTHERED BY THE PRESSURE OF A GUN TO MY RIBS.
ASK THE BRUTE PULLING ME ALONG.
DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY IN OUR NEW REPUBLIC ISLAND LONG?
BORGES AND PERRAMUS ARE HELD UP BY THE REPORTERS.
I'M DOCTOR LÓPEZ PLÁSTICO, AND AS PRIME MINISTER I EXTEND OUR WELCOME, PRODIGAL SON.
THEY'VE SEPARATED US.
COMFORTABLE?
BEFORE, IT WAS THE AIR--COUGH-COUGH--NOW, IT'S THE DUST.

IT'S AS THOUGH THE COUGH-COUGH DUST--IS RETURNING US TO A SIMPLER CONDITION.
Give your hand to GUANO!
SIMPLE, MISTER BORGES. HERE ON MY ISLAND, EVERYTHING IS SIMPLE, PRIMITIVE, NOT COMPLEX.
LIKE GUANO.
EXACTLY. I SEE YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED.
HAND TO GUANO
COUGH-COUGH I REITERATE THAT WHICH I SAID ABOUT THE GUN IN MY RIBS.
WHAT IS GUANO?
SHIT.
GIVE YOUR HAND TO GUANO
I WAS ASKING SERIOUSLY. DON'T CLOWN AROUND.
WE DON'T SAY THAT WORD.
IT WAS HIM WHO--
THE PROBLEM ISN'T THE SHIT. ON THE CONTRARY, THAT'S THE SOLUTION.
2

THE WORD YOU CAN'T SAY IS "CLOWN." WE DON'T ACCEPT THAT ANYBODY--
U$S
LOOK OUT!
COCK
NOW, MEN!
YOU KILLED HIM!
WE'RE HERE, MOSCA!

WELL DONE, MOSCA. TAKE THEM, SOLINGEN.
GET OUT, YOU TWO. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.
COME ON, COME ON, QUICKLY.
ONE MINUTE: IT'S MISSING THE SIGNATURE.
we don't want an island of shit!
Commanda Buster Keaton
S.I.C.
LOOK OUT!

GOOD, SOLINGEN. NOW RUN!!
CRACK
CRACK
DON'T STOP.
THERE WILL BE TROUBLE WITH THE OTHER CAR.
LOWER THEM ONE AT A TIME.
CLOSE IT, JOE.
5

WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE OTHERS?
I'M JOE SARRASANI. I BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING. HERE, YOU WILL BE SAFE.
SAFE FROM...?
THANK YOU FOR WARNING ME.
NO, IT WAS HIM.
I'M MR. SOLINGEN. KNIFE-THROWER FOR S.I.C.
I'M "THE FLY," ACROBAT FOR S.I.C.
BUT WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
THE SECRET ISLAND CIRCUS, AND WE RECEIVE YOU AS ONE OF OUR OWN.
HERE COMES THE OTHER, COMMANDO.
6

WE FAILED. THERE WAS RESISTANCE.
WE HAD BORGES--
--AND SOME MORON GOT IN THE WAY.
THERE, THERE, THAT SON OF A BITCH ON THE T.V.
PERRAMUS-- THE INTERVIEW AT THE AIRPORT.
CAREFUL, DWARF.
DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY IN OUR NEW REPUBLIC ISLAND LONG?
DEFINITELY. ALONGSIDE MAESTRO BORGES, WE BELIEVE THAT ON THIS ISLAND WE'VE FOUND A PATH OF GREATNESS, BANISHED THE CIRCUS, AND--
KOJAK!
WHAT?
THEY'VE DUBBED HIM OVER WITH KOJAK'S VOICE. THAT'S NOT PERRAMUS SPEAKING.
THEY THINK THEY CAN USE YOU. THEY'RE CAPABLE OF ANYTHING.

BUT I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
IT'S SIMPLE. THIS WAS ALWAYS A CIRCUS COUNTRY. IT WAS A NATIONAL PASSION, SUPPLYING ARTISTS FOR EVERYONE. BUT THEN LÓPEZ PLÁSTICO CAME TO POWER--
--AND WE HAD TO GO INTO HIDING: ANY ENERGY THAT'S NOT BEING USED TO COLLECT GUANO IS A WASTE TO THE NATION.
THEY WANT TO TURN US INTO A COUNTRY OF SHIT!
THERE'S AN ARRANGEMENT WITH MR. WHITESNOW WITH THE ENERGY MONOPOLIES TO PROVIDE THE MAXIMUM TONNAGE ANNUALLY. BUT IN FIVE YEARS THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE GUANO--
ETHYL
--AND WE'LL RETURN TO POVERTY. BUT THEY HAVE DONE THEIR BUSINESS.
BUT, HOW? DOESN'T GUANO COME FROM BIRDS THAT PRRRRT?
YES, BUT THESE BIRDS MIGRATED AWAY LONG AGO, AND NO ONE PRRRTS ANYMORE...

AND US, WHY TRY AND HELP US?
YOU--
I LIKE HIM FOR A STRONGMAN.
AND THE ENEMY HAS THE FACE OF A CLOWN.
HA HA HA
HA HA
YOU LIKE THIS SECRET CIRCUS, CANELONES?
TOO MANY MADMEN.

3 Truths of a Few

I CLOSE MY EYES AND IMAGINE A BIRD-PRINT BANDANA. THE IMAGE LASTS ONE SECOND, MAYBE LESS; I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY BIRDS I SAW. IS THE NUMBER OF BIRDS DEFINITE OR INDEFINITE?
THE PROBLEM INVOLVES THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. IF GOD EXISTS, THE NUMBER IS DEFINITE, BECAUSE GOD KNOWS HOW MANY BIRDS I SAW. IF GOD DOES NOT EXIST, THE NUMBER IS INDEFINITE, BECAUSE NO ONE CAN COUNT THEM.
I SAY AGAIN: I CLOSE MY EYES AND IMAGINE A BIRD-PRINT BANDANA.
LOOK, PERRAMUS. THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC IS BUILT FROM ABOVE, TRAINING THE GOVERNORS.
IN THE ERA OF GUANO, ALONG WITH ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION, I PROPOSED POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION: I DIVIDED THE ISLAND AMONG SEVEN DWARFS.
AND WHY CHOOSE A HIERARCHY OF DWARFS?
THEY WERE ALWAYS THE LIVING SYMBOL OF THE OLD CULTURE. BY TAKING THEM, WE WON A FUNDAMENTAL BATTLE: WITHOUT DWARFS, THE CIRCUS IS DEAD.

I'M DEAD.
EVERYTHING OK, CANELONES?
YEAH, JUST...
...PERFECT.
GOOD. IN TEN MINUTES, WE HAVE TO BE READY FOR A FLASH PERFORMANCE.
FLASH PERFORMANCE? WHAT EXACTLY IS THAT?
HA HA! WITH THAT HAT.
A SURPRISE ACTION, ENEMY. AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LAUGHING AT, CANELONES. YOU'RE PART OF IT, TOO.

BECAUSE THE CIRCUS IS ILLEGAL ON THE ISLAND, WE ENGAGE IN SURPRISE PERFORMANCES IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS.
WE HAVE TO KEEP THE FIRE BURNING WITHIN THE PEOPLE. THE IDEA THAT OUR TRADITION HAS NOT DISAPPEARED.
TODAY WE'RE PERFORMING AT THE EXIT OF THE GUANO PROCESSING PLANT.
COMMANDO MARX BROTHERS TO BATTLE!
MARXISM WILL TRIUMPH!
WHO'S HE?
"WE," MY FRIEND, ARE THE MOST COMPLEX DUALITY: TWO PEOPLE--
--IN JUST ONE BODY. TWO HEADS ENTERTAIN BETTER THAN ONE.

COMMANDO MARX: YOU'RE ON IN FIVE!
to stage
NATIONAL GUANO PROCESSING PLANT
C'MON, PERRAMUS. YOU'LL SEE WHAT WE'RE DOING IN THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC.
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME, MR. WHITESNOW?
WHEN I MET YOU, NOT LONG AGO, YOU NEEDED A PAST, AN IDENTITY, A HISTORY. GOOD OR BAD, I GAVE YOU ONE.
THAT'S TRUE.
NOW I OFFER YOU A FUTURE: HERE IS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE IT, PERRAMUS. YOU COULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN HISTORIC CHANGE: JOIN WITH THE WINNERS. PROGRESS AND HISTORY ARE BOTH ON OUR SIDE.
I'M NOT ON ANY SIDE, SEÑOR. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN THIS PROGRESS. NONETHELESS, I AM ENTICED, IT'S TRUE.
IT'S AS THOUGH I'M OF TWO MINDS.
4

GUANO
WE'RE GETTING--
CLOSE.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?
IT'S ALMOST TIME.
WE'LL PARK IN FRONT OF THE PLANT AND WHEN THE WORKERS LEAVE FOR THEIR SHIFT CHANGE, WE'LL JUMP INTO THE STREET. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO?
YES.
NOW.
5

THE CIRCUS IS HERE!!!
LONG LIVE THE CIRCUS
WE WON'T BECOME AN ISLAND OF SHIT!
PLAF
6

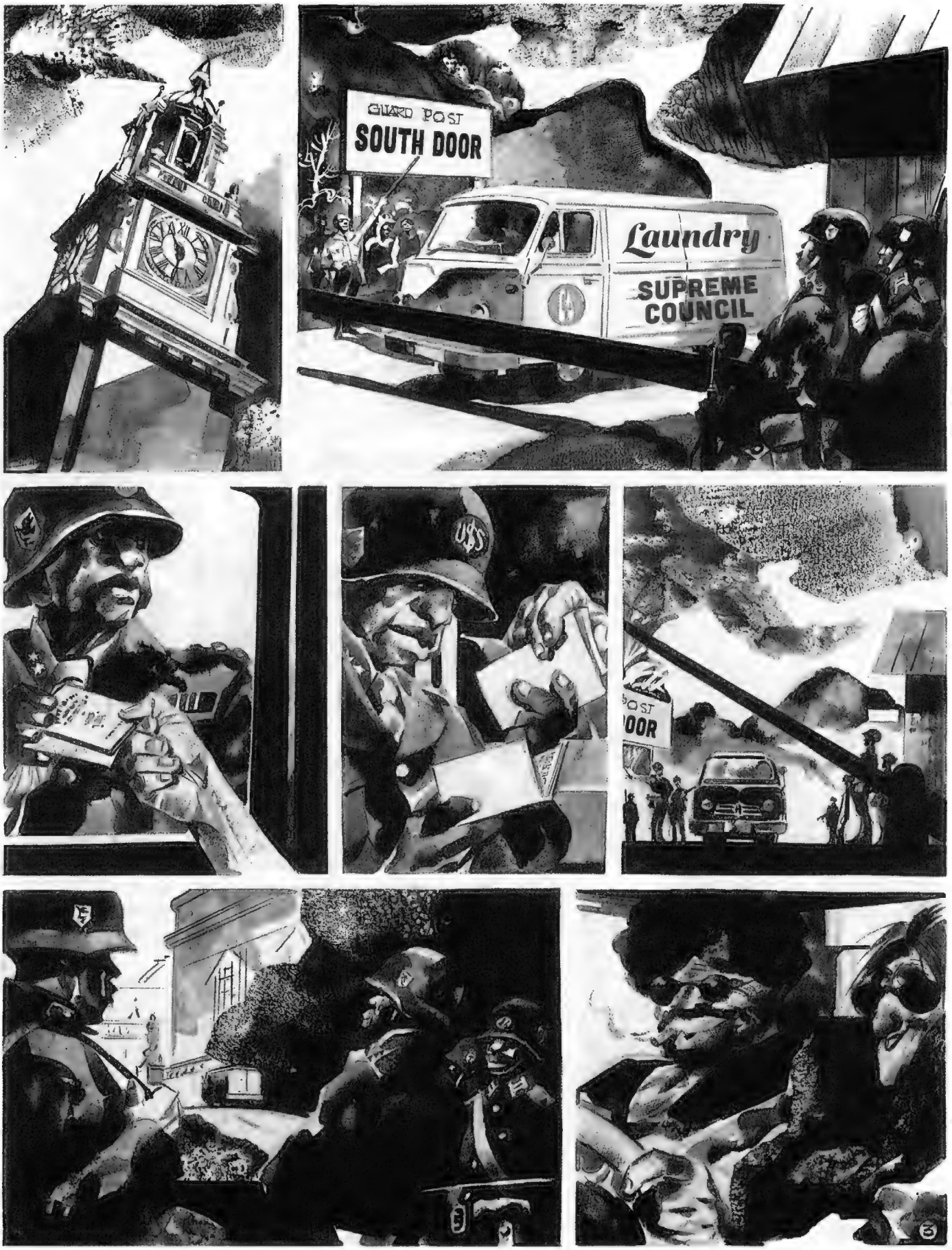
BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PEOPLE?
C'MON C'MON!
THE SHOW MUST GO ON!
C'MON, C'MON!
NO! HERE COME THE POLICE!
WE FAILED! NO? THE PEOPLE DIDN'T LAUGH.
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
WE KNOW THAT WE ARE RIGHT.
YES, PERHAPS. BUT IN ADDITION TO BEING RIGHT, WE HAVE TO CONVINCE THE PEOPLE.
A TRUTH OF THE FEW IS ALMOST A LIE.

IN THAT CASE, LET'S SAY I SAW LESS THAN TEN BIRDS. BUT I DIDN'T SEE NINE, EIGHT, SEVEN, SIX, FIVE, FOUR, THREE, OR TWO BIRDS.
I SAW A NUMBER BETWEEN TEN AND ONE THAT IS NOT NINE, EIGHT, SEVEN, SIX--
--FIVE, ETCETERA. THAT WHOLE NUMBER IS INCONCEIVABLE.
ERGO--
GOD EXISTS.
MAESTRO, THEY'RE ASLEEP. WHY DO YOU INSIST ON THIS ARGUMENTUM ORNITHOLOGICUM?
I'M NOT SPEAKING SO THAT THEY'LL LISTEN, IN THE SAME WAY THAT I DO NOT EAT IN ORDER TO BE WEIGHED, NOR DID I GROW IN ORDER TO BE MEASURED. UNDERSTAND?
NO.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. I DON'T EXPLAIN IN ORDER TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

Ubi Sunt

DEATH TO
MR.
DEATH TO
DOWN

DID YOU BRING IT?
HERE. TAKE IT.
LOWER LEVEL
SOUTH DOOR
CONFERENCE ROOM
WILL YOU COME WITH US, LATER?
I CAN'T. WHAT ABOUT THE MAES-TRO?
OF COURSE. ARE YOU SURE THE PEOPLE FROM THE LAUNDRY COME EVERY DAY?
YES. THEY ENTER BY THE SOUTH DOOR. THAT'S WHERE THE DIRTIEST RAGS ARE. AND REMEMBER: THE CONFERENCE ON TUESDAY IS--
--AT SIX PM.
GOOD LUCK.
BE CAREFUL.


GUARD POST
SOUTH DOOR
Laundry
SUPREME
COUNCIL

TODAY'S THEME, SOVEREIGNS, DEALS WITH A MECHANISM OF POETIC EXPRESSION WITH A LONG CLASSIC LINEAGE...
...THAT GESTURES, AS USUAL, TO DEEPER MOTIVATIONS THAN THE MERE PLEASURE OF REITERATION.
THAT REPETITION OF FORMULAS THAT, IN ORDER TO BE ALMOST RITUAL, WOULD BE CONSIDERED DEVOID OF MEANING. OF COURSE NOT.
TODAY'S THEME IS A RHETORICAL FIGURE, THE CRYSTALIZED EXPRESSION OF A LIVING FEELING.
THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THE CERTAINTY OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS. THE LATIN TRADITION GIVES RISE TO THIS THEME OF..
"UBI SUNT." THE POET FEIGNS IGNORANCE ABOUT THE FATE OF BEINGS, AND...
4

...ASKS ABOUT THEM. JORGE MANRIQUE, IN HIS "STANZAS ABOUT THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER," TAKES UP THE THEME. AS DO EVEN I, IN THE PERHAPS FORGETTABLE POEM "EL TANGO."
BECAUSE "UBI SUNT" IN LATIN HAS A SENSE OF BOTH THE PRECISE AND TRAGIC SIMULTANEOUSLY...
Laundry
SUPREME COUNCIL
WHERE ARE THEY?
THAT'S EXACTLY IT: "UBI SUNT," WHERE ARE THEY? THAT'S THE KEY QUESTION.
...THE RHETORICAL SPACE THAT INTERROGATES THE VERY PASSAGE OF TIME.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHERE ARE MY DWARFS?
OH, THAT. I SHOULD HAVE ASSUMED IT WAS A MISTAKE NOT TO EXPECT SUSPICION.
6

WHERE ARE THEY, YOU OLD LIAR?
DON'T BE STUPID. AS YOU CAN SEE, AND ALREADY KNOW, I DON'T SEE.
HOW DID YOU NOT SEE? IF, UNTIL NOW, YOU HAVE BEEN HERE, YOU HAVE SEEN.
WHAT DO THEY SAY, THE NEWSPAPER, THE RECORDS OF THE LAST THIRTY YEARS, MY MOST RELIABLE BIOGRAPHERS?
THAT YOU'RE... BLIND.
WHAT REASON IS THERE, THEN, IN AFFIRMING THE CONTRARY? WHY WOULD YOU PAY ATTENTION TO--
--A SIMPLE COMIC, VAGUE AND MENDACIOUS.
BAH.
LEAVE HIM ALONE, MISTER.
AH! WHERE ARE THEY?
YOU MUST KNOW, YOU SON OF A BITCH. WHERE ARE THEY?
6

HERE THEY ARE!
ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR--
FIVE, SIX, SEVEN.
WE'VE RECOVERED THE HEART OF THE CIRCUS, YOUR MOST PRECIOUS SYMBOL.
WHO AUTHORIZED THIS ACTION, JOE?
IT WAS ANARCHIC AND IRRESPONSIBLE!
COMMANDO MARX BROTHERS HAD IT PLANNED FOR LATER, AND--
7

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THEM AWAY FROM THE ENEMY?
INDEED, BUT BY WAY OF CONVINCING THEM. WE HAD TO WIN THE DWARFS OVER--
--NOT FORCE THEM TO JOIN US.
BAH. YOU'RE ALL CRAZY. TAKE THEM.
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
YOU FOOL! NOW THEY'LL REALLY BE THE OPPRESSORS!

THE GUARDS ARE COMING HERE!!
HERE'S THE TRAITOR!
HERE'S THE TRAITOR!
TRAITOR TO WHAT? TO WHO?
TO THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC.
IN ORDER FOR THERE TO BE TREASON, THERE HAS TO BE LOYALTY FIRST, AND, AS FAR AS I KNOW--
NOW WE'LL HAVE TO SUPPRESS THEM, TAKE THE CATACOMBS OF THE CIRCUS--
BUT YOU KNOW THAT--
REMEMBER THE MODEL OF "THE NECESSARY ENEMY," PERRAMUS? IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO PERFECT POLITICAL COPIES.
BUT NOW, EVERYTHING IS LOST!

BANG
AAAH!
THEY'RE CLOSING FAST!
COME ON. WE'LL TAKE THE EXIT TO THE SEA!
AND THEM? THEY CAN'T WALK. THEY'RE STILL STUNNED.

LEAVE THEM! THAT WAY THEY'LL LEAVE US ALONE. THEY WON'T PURSUE US.
SON OF A BITCH!
C'MON! HURRY!
I SECURED THE ENTRANCE. IT WILL TAKE--
--A FEW MINUTES FOR THEM TO GET THROUGH.
AND YOU? I MEAN, THE TWO OF YOU?
ME, FOR MY PART, I'LL STAY.
AND ME.

RATATATATA
THEY KNEW THAT WAY OUT, TOO.
THEY KNOW EVERYTHING.
ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT.
WAIT FOR THE END.
RATATATATA
12

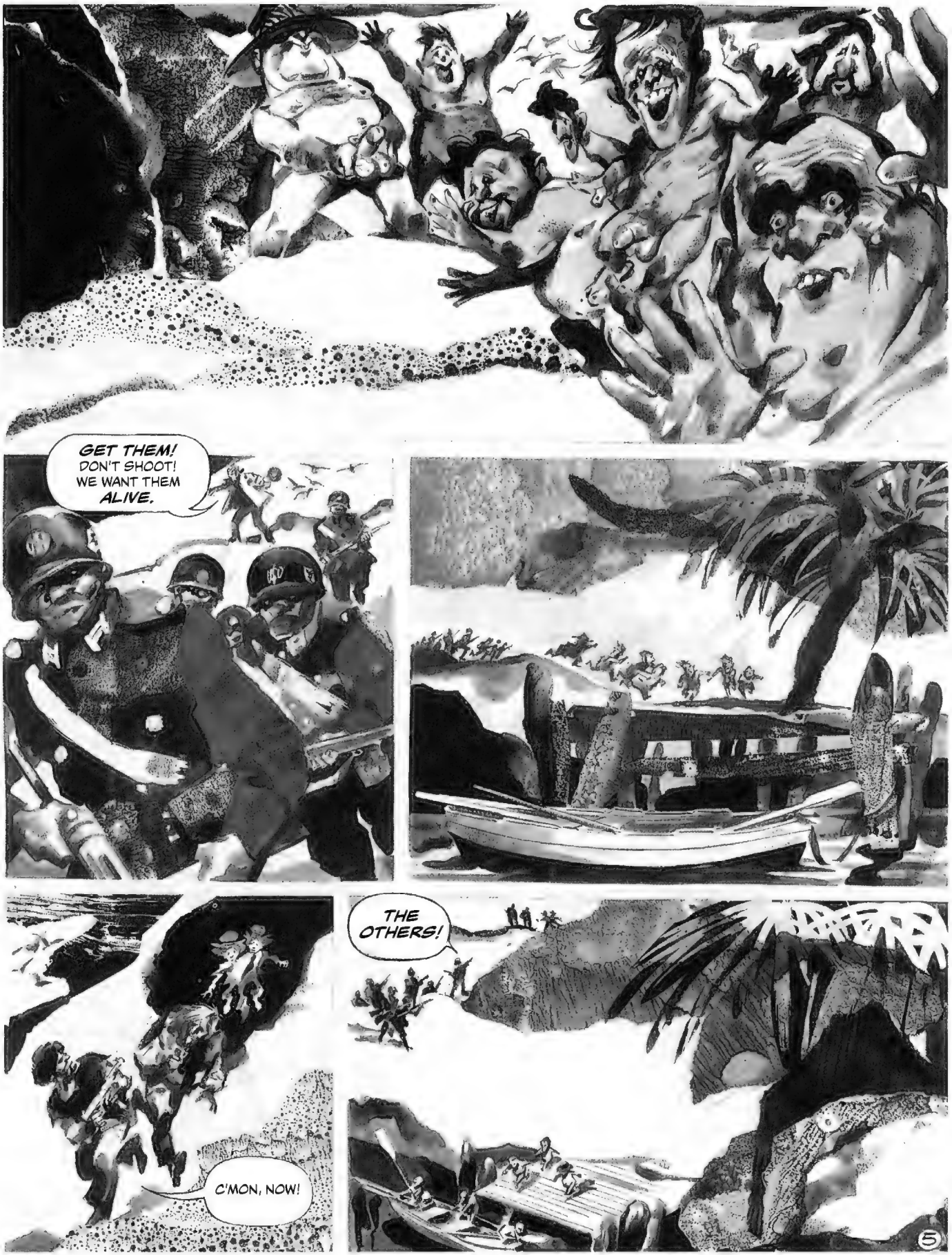
5
The
Big
Finish

WE CAN'T ESCAPE.
WE CAN'T RETURN.
THEY WILL ACCUSE US OF CONSPIRING.
THEY WILL MAKE US GO TO MORE LECTURES.
BE QUIET, DWARFS!
NO.
NO.
NO.
COME OUT, CANELONES. WE PROMISE YOU A JUST, LEGAL, FAIR TRIAL.
THERE WON'T BE VIOLENCE OR VENGEANCE IF YOU COME OUT NOW AND DROP YOUR WEAPONS.

LET'S GO, THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO.
I THINK THAT MAYBE--
I HAVE A PLAN.
GO OUT THERE AND UNDRESS.
THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THE CAVERN'S DRAINAGE PIPE.
IT GOES STRAIGHT TO THE SEA, BY THE PIER.
THEY CAN FIT THROUGH. WE CAN'T.
WELL, HURRY UP. SHIT.

ONCE OUTSIDE, BEFORE BOARDING A SHIP, THEY HAVE TO DISTRACT THE GUARDS SO THAT WE CAN GET OUT.
AND IF THEY DON'T DO THAT, AND ESCAPE?
YOU DON'T KNOW US.
WE'RE FICKLE.
WE'RE VOLATILE.
WE'RE UNTRUST-WORTHY.
WE'RE...
ENOUGH!!
COME OUT, CANELONES. I'M OFFERING YOU JUSTICE, THOUGH NOW IT IS LESS LEGAL AND FAIR. YOU HAVE FIVE MINUTES.
THEY KNOW: WE'LL MEET AT THE PIRANHA ROCK.
3

THE PIRANHA!
IT'S A PLACE THAT CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY SEA.
I'M AN EXPERT FUGITIVE, AND I KNOW A WAY BY LAND.
HELP ME WITH THE LAST ONES!
FOUR MINUTES LEFT!
GET READY!
GET READY!
LOOK! THERE THEY ARE!
4


GET THEM! DON'T SHOOT! WE WANT THEM ALIVE.
THE OTHERS!
C'MON, NOW!
5

GO BACK. THE OTHERS ARE GETTING AWAY!
BANG! RATATATA BANG! BANG!
HIDE IN THE FOREST. I'LL COVER YOU.
ZIP
ZIP
BANG!
NO.
YES.
ARE YOU HIT?
WHAT A SHAME!
6

WHAT A SHAME!
U$L
A SHAME THAT THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE OFFERS OF THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC.
LOOK AT HIS WORK: THE LEADERLESS COUNTRY AND ITS FRIENDS, ON THE ROAD TO DEPORTATION.
YOU AND PERRAMUS WILL BE TRIED FOR TREASON, AND I WILL BE FORCED TO AGAIN ASSUME ABSOLUTE RULE. YOU CAN'T MESS WITH HISTORY LIKE THAT.
AND I WANT TO ALTER IT WITH HANDCUFFS. IT'S COSTLY.
VERY COSTLY.

HOW ARE YOU?
WELL ENOUGH.
I DON'T THINK HE CAN GO ON.
WE'LL STOP HERE. WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
WHAT HAPPENED?
HE PASSED OUT. HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.

I'LL GO ON ALONE AND COME BACK FOR YOU WITH HELP. I'LL BE FAST.
ENEMY. LEAVE ME A GUN, IN CASE THEY COME.
I'LL BE BACK.

WHAT'S GOING ON? EVERYONE'S GONE. WHERE'S PERRAMUS?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GO BACK TO THE LIBRARY. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT.
BUT WHO'S THAT?
NO!
10

NO...
NO...
NO...

IT'S DONE.
12

6 Piranha in Retirement

THE PIRANHA, I PRESUME.
THE ENEMY, SURELY.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
2

WHAT IS THIS?!
WHERE--?

PERRAMUS AND CANELONES, I PRESUME.
BORGES?!
OBVIOUSLY.
WHERE ARE WE?
THE NINTH CIRCLE IS WHERE TRAITORS GO. DO YOU HAVE A LIGHT?
RUICHSSSSSS
A LIBRARY!!
4

OBSERVE THE CRUELTY: AT ONE TIME, I CONCEIVED PARADISE AS AN INFINITE LIBRARY, AND NOW THEY CONDEMN ME--
--TO BE IMPRISONED IN IT, WITHOUT THE LIGHT TO USE IT.
AY!
BURNED MY FINGER.
IN TRUTH, FRIENDS, I EXPECTED THEM.
RUICHSSSSSS
5

YOU WERE WAITING FOR ME, AND I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU. SIMPLE.
NOT QUITE.
YOU'RE THE FIRST TO COME INTO MY TERRITORY IN MANY YEARS. AND YOU WERE THE LAST TO LEAVE.
AT THE MOMENT, I COULDN'T.
YOU WANTED IT THAT WAY. WE WERE THE OPPORTUNITY--LET'S NOT SAY THE LAST--TO DEFEAT MR. WHITESNOW. THE UNION OF--
--THE ORGANIZED POWER OF THE PEOPLE: THE PIRANHA.
6

AND THE MYTHIC ADVERSARY OF THE *REGIME*: THE ENEMY.
BUT IT WASN'T TO BE. YOU CHOSE THE SAFE LIFE. THE HOUSE, WOMAN, WARM BED, THE FAME OF REBELLION.
DON'T BE CRUEL. I WAS TIRED.
ME, TOO. WHEN YOU LEFT, I CLOSED MY BORDERS AND BUILT THIS ISOLATED, SAFE WORLD.
REVOLUTION IS A STAGE IN GROWING, A CRISIS, A SICKNESS. THE MAJORITY ARE CURED WITH TIME.

OTHERS, WE HAVE TO OPERATE ON. IT'S A SIMPLE--
--MUTILATION.
BUT YOU MUST KNOW THAT I--
I KNOW YOU FINALLY ESCAPED IN THAT RIDICULOUS BOMBER.
BUT THAT WAS A WHILE AGO. NOW, I NEED--
THE NOW DOESN'T INTEREST ME, ENEMY--IF THAT'S STILL WHAT YOU'RE CALLED. THE PRESENT DISTRACTS ME FROM REALITY.
PIRANHA! THERE ARE PEOPLE! INTRUDERS ON THE ROCK!

AS I WAS SAYING: THEY'RE--
ENOUGH!
LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY: WHEN I DECIDED TO ISOLATE MYSELF, IT WAS EXACTLY TWO YEARS WITHOUT ANY EXTERNAL CONTACT. I CUT OFF RADIO AND TV PERMANENTLY AND LET THE NEWSPAPERS PILE UP.
AFTER SOME TIME I WOULD READ THEM IN ORDER, DAY BY DAY AS THEY WERE DATED. I TURNED REALITY INTO *HISTORY.* LOOK.
IT'S A PRACTICE THAT REMOVES *ANXIETY,* AND GIVES *PERSPECTIVE.*
THE ENEMY FLEES IN HIS PLANE
IT'S NOT AN *ORIGINAL* IDEA. I READ ABOUT IT IN--
ME, TOO.

I READ THE BIBLE, TOO. WHERE EVERYTHING IS CREDITED TO GOD AND NOTHING TO THE AUTHOR.
DRAMATIC ESCAPE
HE ESCAPES IN HIS OLD PLANE
THERE THEY ARE. THERE'RE SEVEN OF THEM.
AND THAT, IS IT ALSO IN THE BIBLE?
NO, IN DISNEY.
10

AND PERRAMUS?
NOTHING!
NOW, SOMETHING!
DON'T PLAY INTO THE EXECUTIONERS' HAND, PERRAMUS. THEY INTENDED US TO COME TO THIS SINGLE SOURCE OF LIGHT.
AND THEY WILL NOT SPARE YOU HORRORS.
IT'S PART OF MARTYRDOM, THE CON-TEMPLATION OF--
BE QUIET, MAESTRO!

THE CIRCUS IS DEAD.
THEN YOU WON'T HELP ME RESCUE MY PEOPLE.
IT'S A PRETTY STORY, FULL OF CURIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, LOW BLOWS, AND HEROIC ACTIONS. BUT IT ENDS BADLY.
VERY BADLY.
VERY BAD.
IT'S OK. I'LL TRY BY MYSELF. I'LL GO.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU.
LET ME GO?
LET YOU GO ALONE.
12

7 Raining Shit

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M LEAVING, UNCLE GALAPAGOS.
WHAT FOR?
WE'RE GOING TO RESCUE SOME PEOPLE, SAVE THEM FROM WHITESNOW.
ISLAND-ERS?

NO. FOREIGNERS, UNCLE. THEY'RE FRIENDS OF THE ENEMY.
GRINGOS?
NO.
AH.
AND YET, THE GRINGOS WILL COME.
Uncle Galapogo
MAYBE I SHOULD STAY.
PERHAPS. BUT IT'S ALL THE SAME.
THE GRINGOS WILL COME.

AND NO ONE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL DARE TO SUGGEST--
--THAT THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC FAILED TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS OR THE GENEVA CONVENTION AND ALL THAT.
THE SUMMARY TRIAL HAS FOUND, RESPECTED JOURNALISTS, THE THREE FOREIGNERS GUILTY OF SEDITION AND HIGH TREASON AGAINST THIS COUNTRY THAT RECEIVED THEM WITH OPEN ARMS.
BUT WE ARE BENEVOLENT. WE WILL NOT EXECUTE THEM. WE MERELY BANISH THEM. WE'LL SEND THEM BEYOND OUR BORDERS.
AND THIS WILL BE THE MEANS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
IT WILL BE A CEREMONY FULL OF THE CIRCUS STYLE AND TRADITION, ESTEEMED REPORTERS.

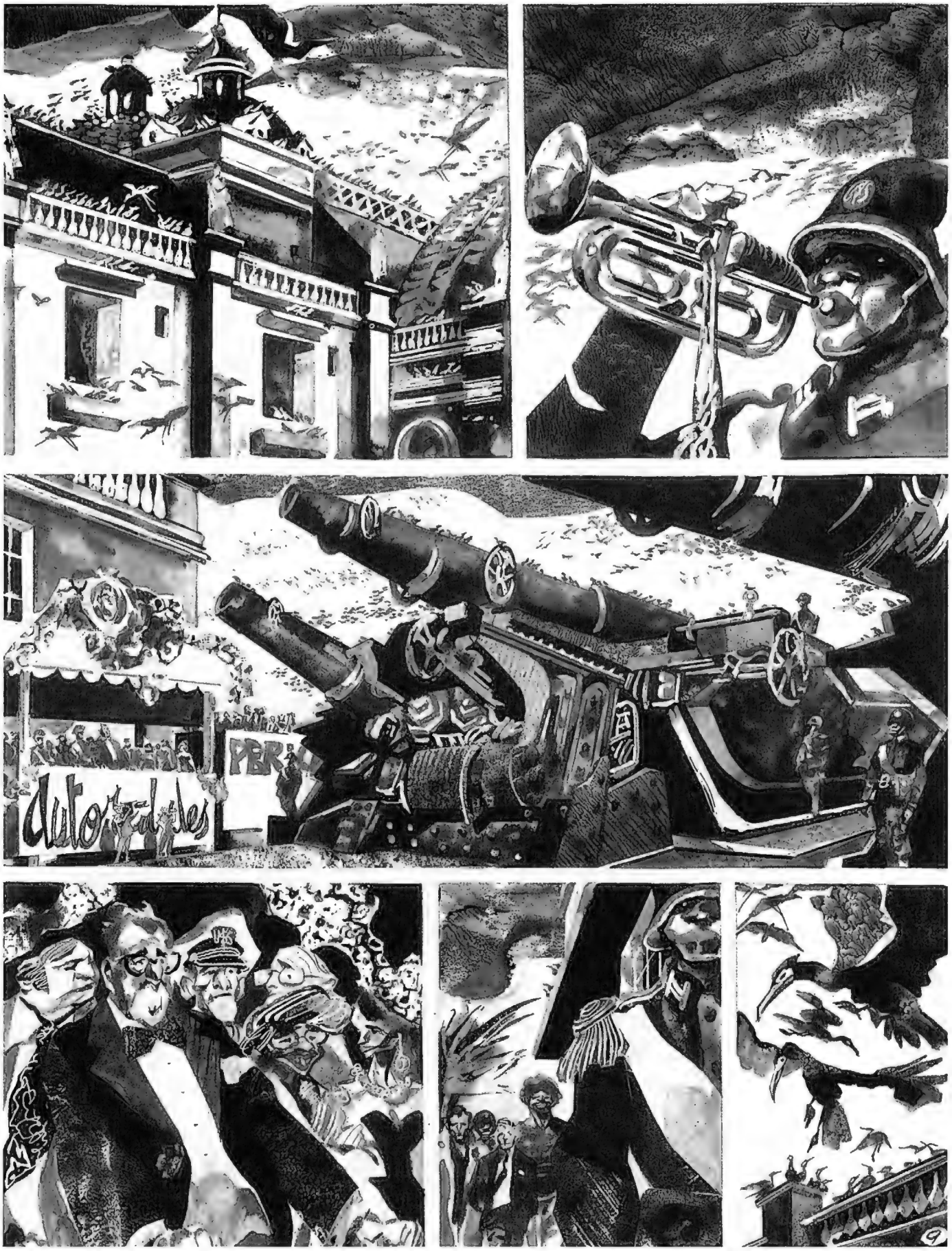
THREE CANNONBALL-MEN, DULY CONDITIONED, WILL FLY ACROSS THE SKY!
AT DAWN TOMORROW, THEY WILL LEAVE THE ISLAND IN A FLASH.
BECAUSE HE WHO LIVES FOR THE CIRCUS, FLIES FOR THE CIRCUS.
AND IF WE SUMMON THEM IT'S BECAUSE A CRIME IS GOING TO BE COMMITTED, ANOTHER ONE, AND EVERYONE MUST TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE FALSE NEW ISLAND ORDER.
NATIONAL GUANO PROCESSING PLANT

I'VE RETURNED TO HELP THE ENEMY. YOU KNOW ME AND YOU KNOW HIM. ARE YOU WILLING TO FOLLOW US?
THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD. BUT IF WE GO, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? THE CIRCUS AGAIN? NO, NOT THAT.
AND WHO KNOWS THOSE MEN?
WHO ARE THEY?
WHAT? YOU DON'T KNOW?
I JUST ARRIVED FROM THE INTERIOR GARRISON.
THEY'RE THE OLD MAN FROM THE LECTURES, CANELONES, AND THE OTHER ONE, THAT PERRAMUS.

AH. THEM--
AT DAWN... BANG!
YOU SEE ALL THE BIRDS?
YEAH. IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE--
THE MISTER!
OPEN IT, QUICKLY!
YES, SEÑOR.
BORGES, COME OUT.

IS IT DAWN ALREADY?
NO.
BUT IT WILL BE, SOON ENOUGH.
IF YOU LISTEN TO ME, THE SUN WILL RISE FOR YOU.
I THOUGHT THAT--
THERE IS A DIRECT CALL FROM SWEDEN. THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR "EXILE," AND WANT TO HEAR HIS VOICE. I EXPLAINED THAT WHAT THEY'D HEARD WASN'T TRUE, AND YOU YOURSELF WOULD CLARIFY THERE IS NOTHING AGAINST BORGES.
WHY?
I WOULD LIKE TO SAVE YOU. AFTER ALL, YOU DIDN'T PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THAT ABSURD REBELLION. TO SAVE YOURSELF, YOU ONLY HAVE TO SAY THAT IT WAS A LIE THAT TOMORROW YOU WERE TO BE "BANISHED."
AND IF I *REFUSE?*
YOU WILL BE *"BANISHED"* AT DAWN, AS SCHEDULED.

IT'S CURIOUS. THE HEIGHT OF MAGICAL REALISM: TO SAVE MYSELF, I MERELY HAVE TO SAY THAT I WILL SAVE MYSELF.
THAT'S IT.
THE SWEDES ARE NAÏVE.
NOT ME.
NO, NOT YOU.
IT'S WORSE. YOU'RE STUPID AND MEDIOCRE. YOU'RE DON'T EVEN HAVE THE SKILL OF A VILLAIN. YOU'RE JUST TEMPTING FATE.
TAKE HIM!
8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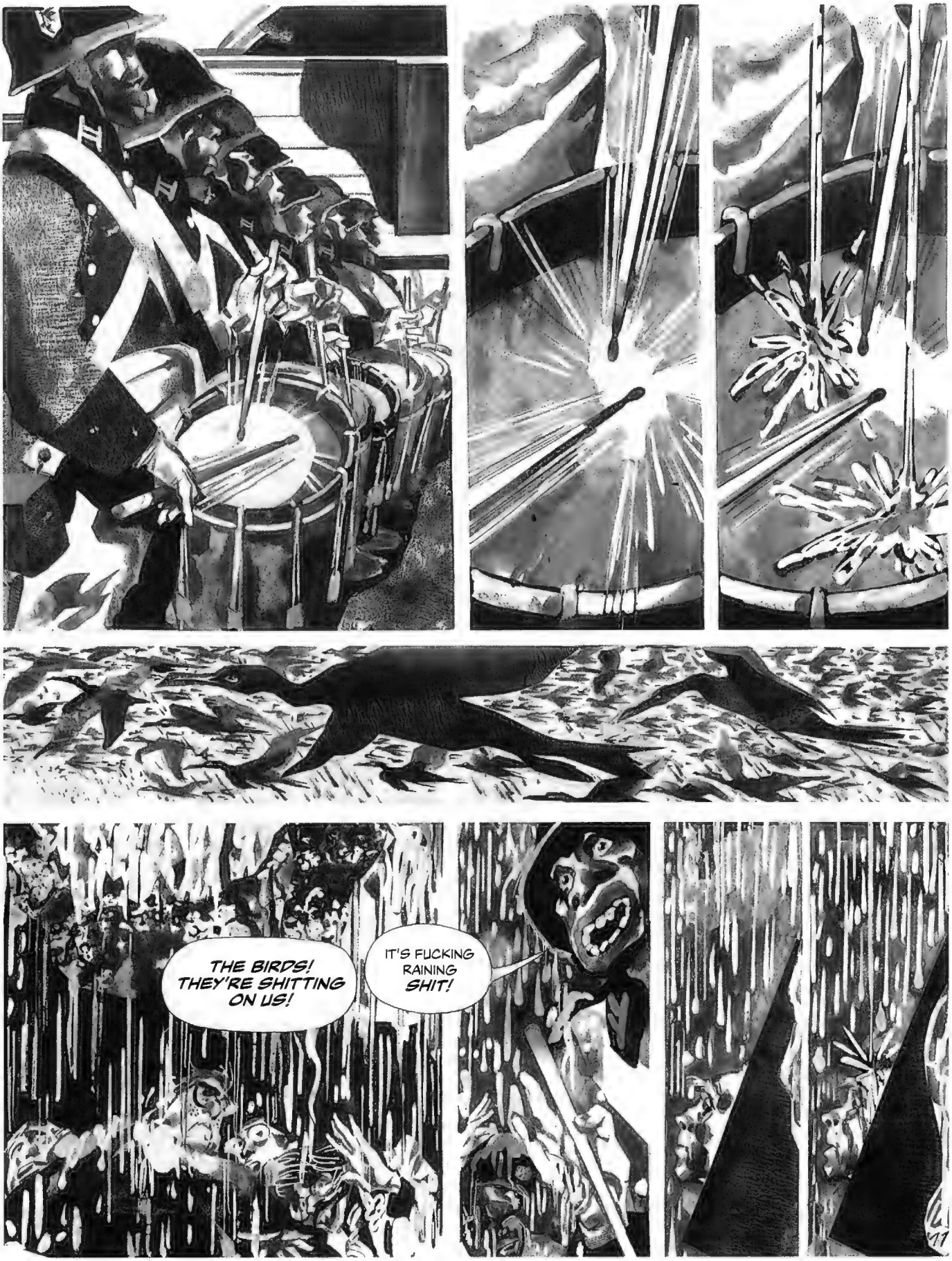
THE BIRDS! THEY'RE SHITTING ON US!
IT'S FUCKING RAINING SHIT!

THE BIRDS HAVE RETURNED!
THEY'RE THE GRINGOS!

Mastershit

AS LONG AS IT'S RAINING SHIT, THEY WON'T EXECUTE THEM.
OF COURSE NOT. BUT ONLY AS LONG AS, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE REST OF THE ISLAND IF THE BIRDS DON'T STOP SHITTING?
I DON'T KNOW. AS LONG AS THEY ARE, WE COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.
WHAT WILL HAPPEN, COMPAÑEROS, IS THIS PHENOMENON WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE ISLAND.
LONG LIVE
IT'S PROVIDENTIAL, COMPAÑEROS. WITH THIS ENORMOUS INVASION OF BIRDS OUR RESERVES OF GUANO WILL LAST FOR A HUNDRED YEARS MORE. WORK WILL BE GUARANTEED FOR ALL.
WE MUST CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE REGIME WILL BE.
AS LONG AS THOSE UGLY BIRDS KEEP EVACUATING THEIR INTESTINES, WE'RE SAFE.

IN THE BIBLE, THERE ARE SEVERAL INSTANCES OF TIMELY RAINS: THE MANNA OF LIFE, THE PURIFYING FIRE--
BUT THERE'S NO MENTION OF THIS KIND OF PROVIDENTIAL EXCRESCENCE.
QUIET, THERE'S A NOISE OUTSIDE.
CALM DOWN, GENTLEMEN. IT'S ONLY BEEN 24 HOURS SINCE THE DELUGE STARTED, AND WE ALREADY HAVE SOME ANSWERS--
--ALL OF THEM ENCOURAGING. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THIS SEEMS TO BE A LOCAL PHENOMENON. IT IS NOT HAPPENING IN OTHER REGIONS OR COUNTRIES.
WE'LL SHATTER THE WORLD GUANO MARKET.
IN THE SECOND PLACE, THIS APPEARS TO BE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TYPE OF BIRD THAN THAT WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY DEPOSITED ITS WEALTH ON OUR ISLAND IN CENTURIES PAST.
THIS IS OUR FAMILIAR ISLAND CORMORANT. IN THIS SLIDE, WE SEE IT'S DIGESTIVE-EXCRETORY APPARATUS IS A NORMAL SIZE.
AND THIS IS THE BIRD THAT HAS BEEN VISITING US FOR THE PAST DAY. THIS SPECIMEN WAS COLLECTED FROM THE SEA, WHERE IT FELL EXHAUSTED AFTER EVACUATING EVERY LAST GRAM OF ITS FECAL MATTER.
AND HERE YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE IN ITS DIGESTIVE-EXCRETORY SYSTEM: IT'S MUCH MORE DEVELOPED--AS THOUGH THE BIRD WAS CREATED JUST TO DEFECATE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "CREATED?" ARE YOU INSINUATING THAT--
LET'S NOT JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS. SOMETHING WE'VE DISCOVERED--
MISTER! THE PRISONERS ARE ESCAPING!
LET'S GO! THERE IS A VAN ON THE CORNER.
BORGES, THIS IS THE PIRANHA.
PIRANHA, THIS IS BORGES.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
BORGES! YOU'RE--
--THE ONE WHO HASN'T WON THE NOBEL PRIZE.
LOOK, PRECISELY--
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND: SHE ONLY READS THE NEWS AFTER A YEAR HAS PASSED.
IT'S NOT A BAD HABIT. WHEN I DIE, SHE'LL FIND OUT A YEAR LATER, AND SO I'LL LIVE A LITTLE LONGER, AT LEAST, FOR HER.
AND TELL ME, YOUNG MAN, TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THIS STRANGE PHENOMENON THAT I DARE NOT QUALIFY AS CLIMATOLOGICAL OR PHYSIOLOGICAL?
LIKE UNCLE GALAPAGOS SAID, IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE GRINGOS--
UNCLE GALAPAGOS?
4

FACUNDO VARELA STILL LIVES? THE POET AND LEADER?
OF COURSE.
YOU KNOW HIM?
IT WAS IN GENEVA, IN MY YOUTH.
FACUNDO VARELA WAS THE ONLY BLACK MAN IN THE CITY. HE WAS RAISED BY THE FAMILY OF THE FRENCH CONSUL ON THIS ISLAND WHEN IT WAS STILL A BRITISH COLONY, AND EDUCATED IN EUROPE.
HE STUDIED LITERATURE WHILE WRITING ONOMATOPOETIC POEMS. HE DETESTED "GRINGOS" IN GENERAL, AND DREAMED OF REVOLUTION.
AND WHAT DID UNCLE GALAPAGOS DO?
IT WAS HIS MOST GLORIOUS HOUR WHEN, IN 1930, A POPULAR REBELLION REACHED THE BRITISH. HE, RETURNED FROM EUROPE, WAS THE AUTHOR OF THEIR VICTORY.
--WITH WHAT WAS CALLED "THE TORTOISE'S STRATEGY." I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS, BUT IT WAS FAMOUS AND OFTEN CITED BY HIS FOLLOWERS.

AND THEN?
THE "OTHER GRINGOS" ARRIVE, AS HE SAID. THEY INSTALLED THEMSELVES AND IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER REMAIN TODAY: MR. WHITESNOW HAS BEEN GOVERNOR OF THIS ISLAND FOR THREE DECADES.
AND IF IT KEEPS "RAINING SHIT," SO IT SHALL REMAIN FOR MANY MORE YEARS.
LOOK, THE SKY! NO MORE BIRDS!
FRIENDS, WHAT FELL NO LONGER FALLS.
THE CLEAR SKY! NOW, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS HARVEST IT!
6

WHAT IS THAT?
GRINGOS, AGAIN.
7

MAESTRO!!
PROFESSOR MASTERSHIT!! I THOUGHT OF YOU, WHEN--
GREETINGS, DOCTOR LÓPEZ PLASTICO.
THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE.
FOLLOW ME.
BUT, WHO'S THAT?

PROFESSOR MASTERSHIT IS THE FOREMOST AUTHORITY IN THE WORLD ON GUANO AND ENERGY. I OWE MY PROJECT TO HIM--OUR ECONOMIC PROJECT FOR THE NEW ISLAND REPUBLIC.
I STUDIED WITH HIM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA. I KNEW HE'D BE INTERESTED, SCIENTIFICALLY, IN OUR NEW PHENOMENON. LET'S HEAR IT, PROFESSOR.
2
I'LL BE BRIEF.
I SEE THE QUESTION HAS ALREADY BEEN RAISED. YES, GENTLEMEN: THIS ISLAND HAS BEEN FAVORED BY AN EXPERIMENT OF INCALCULABLE VALUE, BOTH SCIENTIFICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY.
THE EXPERIMENT AND SUCCESSFUL TEST OF A NEW SPECIES, THE MUTANT FLORIDA CORMORANT, FRUIT OF OUR MIAMI CENTER OF EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY, MUTATED FROM YOUR ISLAND CORMORANT.
AND WHOSE PRODUCTIVE VIRTUES I DON'T NEED TO EXPLAIN.
THANK YOU, PROFESSOR!!
9

IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE, MR. WHITESNOW. PROGRESS HAS ITS OPPOSITE REACTIONS. IN THIS CASE, WE HAVE ACHIEVED A LARGE PRODUCTION OF FAST-DRYING FECAL MATERIAL--
--WHICH CONSIDERABLY SHORTENS THE HARDENING TIME AND IMPROVES THE FINAL CONSISTENCY.
AND WHAT IS THE SIGNIFI-CANCE?
THE SIGNIFICANCE IS THAT IT REQUIRES NEW TECHNOLOGY TO PROCESS IT. THE PLANTS ON THE ISLAND ARE ABSOLUTELY USELESS, NOW.
SON OF A BITCH!!

WHAT KIND OF MANNERS ARE THOSE, MR. WHITESNOW? JUST SEE THIS MARVEL, SIR--
--FOR YOURSELF.

AND DON'T BE SO *IRRITABLE.* IT'S INCONVENIENT.
LOOK: THE HELICOPTERS THAT ACCOMPANIED ME CARRY 300 TRAINED ADVISORS...
... READY TO SHOW YOU THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY, AND THE NEED FOR URGENCY: *THIS SHIT WON'T WAIT.*
12

9 The Tortoise's Strategy

THERE THEY GO SHOUTING AGAIN.
THE ISLAND, THE ISLAND.
THE ISLAND HAS BEEN HIT...
AND ALL THE ISLANDERS...
ARE COVERED IN SHIT!

HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO LEAVE THEM THERE?
UNTIL OUR VICTORY.
AND WHEN DO YOU THINK THAT WILL BE, UNCLE GALAPAGOS?
WE'RE MEETING TO ASSESS THE LAST TWO MONTHS OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GRINGO INVADERS, AND THEIR NATIVE ALLIES. WE'RE NOT DISCUSSING DEADLINES, BUT OBJECTIVES.
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE DISCUSS TACTICS AND FIGHTING STRATEGIES.
WE, FOLLOWING THE REVOLUTIONARY TORTOISE'S STRATEGY, WILL DO AS THE TORTOISE DOES. FACING OFF AGAINST THE PREDATORS THREATENING HER EGGS--

--WE'LL BE MANY, AND HIDDEN IN DIFFERENT PLACES AT THE SAME TIME. AND THOUGH MANY WILL BE DESTROYED, THE PREDATOR KNOWS IT CAN NEVER DEFINITIVELY FIND THEM ALL.
"THE EGGS OF REBELLION WILL FEED THE REVOLUTION."
VIVA LA REVOLUCION!!
GRINGOS GET OUT
WE BELIEVE WE HAVE INTERPRETED THE TRUE TORTOISE'S STRATEGY: IN THE FACE OF EXTERNAL THREAT, THERE IS ONLY HIBERNATION, ENTRENCHMENT, AND THE ACCUMULATION OF FORCES.

UNTIL THE SUN OF REBELLION RISES AGAIN, WE HAVE RETURNED TO UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY, SEEKING THE RESTORATION OF OUR SETS DESTROYED BY REPRESSION--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. EACH OF THEM INTERPRETS THE STRATEGY IN THEIR OWN WAY. AND YOU DON'T DEFINE IT. YOU DON'T SAY ANYTHING.
I'LL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU, MY OLD CLASSMATE. YOU ONCE EXPLAINED THE PARADOX OF THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE.
PARADOXES ARE SEDUCTIVE. IT CAN BE SHOWN, IF WE ELIMINATE THE IDEA OF TIME, THAT THE HARE NEVER REACHES THE TORTOISE--
EXACTLY. IF WE ELIMINATE TIME, ALL ROADS, SLOW OR FAST, LEAD TO REVOLUTION, AND SO THEY ARE IRRELEVANT.

ALWAYS SO SUBTLE, YOU OLD REACTIONARY.
THAT'S WHY I BELIEVE THAT THIS INDIFFERENCE TO MEANS IS THE TRUE TORTOISE'S STRATEGY.
TO BE BRIEF: NO EVENT, HOWEVER SURPRISING, CAN--
GOOD AFTERNOON, GENTLEMEN!
5

DON'T TRY ANYTHING! MY MEN WILL SHOOT, AND THAT'S NOT WHAT WE CAME FOR--
--EXACTLY.
YOU WON'T LEAVE HERE ALIVE, MISTER. THIS IS A SIMPLE COUP, BUT THE MILITIAMEN WILL KILL THEM.
RELAX, GENTLEMEN. I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU.
FIGHT WITH ME AGAINST THE INVADER!!
THIS IS MY PLAN. TOMORROW, WE CAN TAKE POWER.
6

WHERE IS MR. WHITESNOW?
I DON'T KNOW, MR. MASTERSHIT. HE DISAPPEARED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.
BUT WHAT GOOD ARE YOU AS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, DR. LÓPEZ PLASTICO? THAT MAN COULD DESTROY OUR PROJECT FOR THE NEWER ISLAND REPUBLIC!!!
I'LL GIVE THE ORDER TO--
IF HE DOESN'T SHOW UP BY THIS AFTERNOON FOR THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW PLANT, YOU'LL HAVE TO DECLARE HIM A FUGITIVE, AND--
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME?
AH. THERE YOU ARE. WHERE WERE YOU?
FOR A LEADER LIKE MYSELF, IT'S HARD TO ACCEPT, WITHOUT SUFFERING, THAT MY ERA--AFTER SO MANY YEARS IN POWER--IS OVER.

I KNOW THAT I MUST MAKE WAY FOR A NEW COUNTRY, NEW LEADERS, PROGRESS, AT LAST. I HAVE BEEN IN ISOLATION, MEDITATING, AND HAVE FOUND MY PEACE.
I DON'T BELIEVE HIM! THAT SON-OF-A-BITCH MURDERER DOESN'T HAVE ANY MORALS!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I ASKED, PIRANHA. I ASKED WHETHER YOU'RE READY, WILLING.
READY? YES, UNCLE GALAPAGOS.
THE NEW IS OLD
THE NEWER WILL
SAVE US FROM SHIT
BUT NOT VERY WILLING.
DON'T WORRY. WE WON'T MAKE A MOVE UNTIL WHITESNOW COMPLETES HIS PROMISE: THE SABOTAGE OF MASTERSHIT AND THE GUARDS LOYAL TO HIM. THERE THEY ARE NOW.

IT'S A TRAP.
WATCH FROM YOUR PLACE. THIS ONE IS MINE.
THAT WAS VERY HARD, EVEN FOR A TORTOISE, GALAPAGOS.
SHE'S BRAVE AND BELIEVES IN THINGS, AND THAT'S WHY SHE FIGHTS. MISTER WHITESNOW IS A DESPICABLE CREATURE.
SHE'S FULL OF HATE, BUT SHE'S NOT STUPID. SHE KNOWS THE MOMENT IS NOW. ONCE THE NEW TECHNOLOGY IS INSTALLED.
I THINK YOU'VE LOST FAITH IN YOUR REVOLUTION, GALAPAGOS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BECAUSE YOU'VE RESIGNED YOURSELF TO WATCHING IT ON TV.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT REVOLUTIONARIES, YOU OLD CHARLATAN!
VERY LITTLE, TRUE. BUT ANYONE CAN LEARN, IT SEEMS--
--WITH AN AUDIOVISUAL AID.
PLEASE--
DON'T ARGUE WITH ME.
YES, OF COURSE. THERE ARE ALREADY TOO MANY DISAGREEMENTS.

10 Last Words

ATTENTION!
EVERYTHING IS READY!
YES, IT IS!
THE WORKERS WILL TAKE THE FACTORIES.
A MILITIA GROUP WILL ATTACK THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION.

ANOTHER GROUP WILL IMMOBILIZE THE GRINGO IN-VADERS' FORCES.
THE REST WILL MOBILIZE THE CROWD GATHERED FOR THE CEREMONY.
IT'S IMPORTANT. EVERY HEAD IN EVERYTHING, AND ONE THAT IS IN EVERYTHING.
LIKE THE TORTOISE.
IT MUST BE PROTECTED, SAFE.
YOURS, GALAPAGOS.
WE'RE JUST WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL.
AND NOW, AS A SYMBOL OF THE BEGINNING OF THE NEWER ERA, PROFESSOR MASTERSHIT, BENEFACTOR OF OUR COUNTRY--
2

--WILL TOSS THE FIRST SHOVELFUL OF THE NEW GUANO INTO THE BOILING TANK.

TAKE THAT, SON OF A BITCH!
IT'S DONE! IT'S DONE!
NOW!
NOW, MEN!
NOW, MEN!
HANKY, GO HOME!

GET THAT SON-OF-A-BITCH TRAITOR!!
RATATATA
RATATATA
GALAPAGOS! DID YOU SEE THAT?
WHAT'S WRONG? GALA-PAGOS!

I THINK IT'S OVER, OLD MAN. YOU WERE RIGHT. BUT IT'S NOT THAT I HAD LOST FAITH.
I WAS AFRAID. NOTHING MORE.
VIVA PERÓN
THEY'RE AFRAID!
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
6

YOU WANT TO FLY?
FLY! FLY!

THEY'RE GOING. THEY'RE GOING, AND THEY'LL NEVER COME BACK!
THEY'RE GOING, THEY'RE GOING!
AND NEVER COMING BACK!
Uncle Galápagos
8

DON'T PUSH.
DON'T CENSOR ME. I HAVE TO SAY MY LAST WORDS.
I HOPE THEY ARE FOR POSTERITY.
YES, OF COURSE.
WE WON, BUT-- BE CAREFUL.
9

THE GRINGOS WILL RETURN.
FREEDOM! FREEDOM!
FREEDOM! FREEDOM!
FREEDOM! FREEDOM!
10

Epilogue

AND, AT THIS MOMENT, WHEN HERE, ON THIS STAGE, ALL THE FORCES WHOSE UNION MADE POSSIBLE THE UNDEFEATABLE NATIONAL UNITY AND FREEDOM OF OUR COUNTRY, ARE REPRESENTED--
UN
UN
ONE
ONE
--WE HOPE TO SYNTHESIZE, IN A DOUBLE TRIBUTE, BOTH THE HISTORY, AND THE TRIUMPHANT STRUGGLE OF THE REVOLUTION, IN THESE MONUMENTS.
FACUNDO VARELA, UNCLE GALAPAGOS, FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY, AND MASTERMIND OF THE REVOLUTION.

AND ALSO MR. WHITESNOW, EXECUTING ARM AND MARTYR OF THE PEOPLE'S FIGHT, RECEIVES THE RECOGNITION HE DESERVES.
LET'S GO. THE PLANE TO SANTA MARÍA IS WAITING.
I THINK I'VE ALREADY SEEN TOO MUCH.
YOU KNOW WHAT THE BUST OF THE MISTER IS MADE OF?
NO.
SHIT!
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
OF COURSE I LIKE IT. A LOT. BUT IT'S HARD TO--
FOR ME, NO. I DON'T LIKE ANY CEREMONIES, EVEN IF THEY ARE FOR THE REVOLUTION.
OH, SURE. THE REVOLUTION, YOU MEAN.
YEAH. WHAT DID YOU THINK I MEANT? TOO MANY MONUMENTS, TOO MANY HOMAGES, TOO MANY DWARFS.

PERRAMUS BOOK IV
Tooth for Tooth

This fourth, and final, part of the *Perramus* saga was written and drawn mostly in 1988 and 1989. It had been two years since the adventure on Mr. Whitesnow's island—*Perramus III: The Island of Guano*—and that shows in many aspects of this story. Coherently or not, in the story that accompanies it (and us), we begin with the protagonist at the end of the dictatorship, and in that climate, we conceived it; it's logical, then, that the political changes of the '80s can be seen reflected in the work. So here, the characters are not only a few years older, but also the historical reality is changed. There are no longer Marshals in Santa María. The city is transformed. The climate they live in is different, there is no longer an oppressor to fight. Nevertheless, included in this different context, there is Borges again, who, in some way, like in *Perramus II: The Soul of the City*, mobilizes the group and commits them to a symbolic and model endeavor that, in this case, takes them all over the world.

Tooth for Tooth is, undoubtedly, the most gratuitous adventure in the *Perramus* stories. It's also the longest, and least tragic. Perhaps a certain kind of mistaken humor is abused, persecutions of people proliferate, and there is excessive reference to historical figures from what we call the real world. It begins with the tango musician Gardel, of course, and his glorious and devastated smile. In fact, the reconstruction of this emblematic icon of happiness, which has been lost, will be the final goal of the endeavor. The references to the Gardelian universe incinerated and reborn in myth from the ashes of Medellín are multiple: they start with the sensitive Alfredo Le Pera, Gardel's lyricist, recovering his progeny, to the unforgettable Blondes of New York, the titular stars of Gardel's song, who become amorous, the ancient custodians of a memory that's intoxicating, once and for all.

It's unnecessary to clarify that nothing in *Perramus* is or aspires to be the truth: Borges has not only not died, but he was awarded the Nobel Prize in the previous episode. And here, the actions of characters of pen and paper called Frank Sinatra, Fidel Castro, Gabriel García Márquez, Borges's widow, María Kodama, and the great tango musician Osvaldo Pugliese—among others—are not necessarily attributable to their namesakes of flesh and blood.

If some lend face and gestures to this story, others, generously, and without knowing it, have given ideas. Thus, the original inspiration for *Tooth for Tooth* was given to me by Osvaldo Soriano, a guy in Paris who sold Gardel's teeth. In addition, as Perramus himself says in the text, the most grotesque and brilliant idea of the chapter "Under My Skin"—the competition over estimation, when putting things on the table—is from the inimitable cartoonist and author Roberto Fontanarrosa, who used it in one of his most memorable stories: "No sé si he sido claro" ["I Don't Know If I've Been Clear"]. I'd like those two references to be seen and read as they are: tokens of admiration, testimony of affinity.

One more thing, to conclude. The emblematic force of Gardel, who "every day sang better," if we adhere strictly to the popular legend, followed here by Borges, who in reality detested Gardel's work, becomes the drive and pretext for an action. Whose meaning is not in the end, or in its spectacular conclusion—but in the journey, itself. No mythical endeavor will save it (or us) from the shipwrecks of history, but it is the gesture of seeking, the voyage itself—as in Cavafy's poem "Ithaka," evoked at the end—that justifies the endeavor, giving it its only meaning. And I believe that, for *Perramus*, too—the comic *Perramus*, I mean—it's worth thinking of it like that, too.

—**JUAN SASTURAIN**, 2006

Prologue

The Academy
BAR BILLIARDS
YOU NOTICE HOW EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT?
FOR EXAMPLE?
IT'S TRUE. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME WE SAW EACH OTHER?
EVERYTHING: THE WHOLE ATMOSPHERE, THE PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE. THE FEELING OF TERROR IS GONE.
WHEN WE CAME BACK FROM MR. WHITESNOW'S ISLAND, THERE WERE TWO MONTHS UNTIL THE ELECTIONS, AND NOW--
--TWO YEARS.
HANG ON. WHAT DO YOU MEAN, TWO YEARS?

TWENTY-SIX MONTHS AND NINE DAYS EXACTLY!
CANELONES!
AMIGO!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME?
IN MONTEVIDEO. UNTIL YESTERDAY, WHEN I GOT AN URGENT TELEGRAM--
--FROM THIS ONE, AFTER SO MANY MONTHS.
2

SAME HERE. PERRAMUS CALLED ME AND ASKED THAT I RUSH OVER.
WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU NEED CASH, HELP, SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE?
GO SQUIDS #17
BORGES CALLED ME, AND ASKED ME TO LOOK FOR YOU.
HE DIDN'T SAY WHY?
NO.
I DO WANT TO SEE THE OLD MAN AGAIN.
GOTTA HAVE SOMETHING IN YOUR SIGHTS.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT COULD BE.
GARDEL'S TOMB DESECRATED

1 Por Una Cabeza

MONEY EXCHANGE
THE MAESTRO WAS VERY EXACT: AT SIX IN THE AFTERNOON, FROM THE PAY PHONE AT CORRIENTES AND CALLAO.
BORGES?
YES.
IT'S PERRAMUS. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
DID YOU HEAR ME, MAESTRO?

DON'T DO ANYTHING. JUST WAIT, AND DON'T BE IMPATIENT, MY FRIEND. UNDERSTAND?
I THINK SO: WAIT HERE.
AND DON'T LOSE OUR HEADS.
CLICK
WHAT DID HE SAY?
TO WAIT, AND THEN CLICK.

PARDON ME, GENTLEMAN.
HOW CLUMSY OF YOU, FRIEND.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?
FINE, THANKS.
HE SHOULD BE TRAMPLED!
348
THEY TOOK THE WRONG BAG! THIS ISN'T MINE!
AND THEY'RE ALREADY GONE.
3

TAXI
TAXI, SIR?
FOLLOW THAT OTHER TAXI!
1532
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?
THIS IS BIGGER THAN--
AND WHAT ABOUT THE MAESTRO?
AND THERE ARE STILL NO SIGNS OF THE GRAVE ROBBERS--
HURRY!
--IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED THAT THE HEAD OF EL ZORZAL, AKA THE SONG THRUSH, WAS STOLEN AND THERE ARE RUMORS ABOUT WHERE IT MIGHT BE HEADED.
CALM DOWN, FRIEND. DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD: LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO GARDEL.
LOOK OUT!

THE BAG, AND OUR LIVES. WE'RE GOING TO LOSE THEM BOTH!
LET'S SEE WHAT THE FUCK IS IN HERE.
STOP LISTENING TO THE RADIO!
--UNSUCCESSFUL SO FAR, ON THE EVE OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEDELLÍN TRAGEDY--
YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED? THERE'S NO SURE THING, MY FRIEND. THAT'S WHY I WATCH OUT FOR MYSELF.
WATCH OUT!
AND LOOK AT WHAT I'M CARRYING. WITH THIS, I DARE ANYONE TO COME AT ME.
5

YEAH, THAT'S GREAT, BUT LOOK WHERE--
UUUUY
LOOK AT THIS!
MY HEAD.
AY, MAMI.
THE PACKAGE!
WHAT HAPPENED? WERE YOU EVEN LOOKING WHERE YOU WERE GOING, OLD MAN? ARE YOU CRAZY?

NO. THOSE MEN--
BUT, WHAT'S THIS?
GET OUT, QUICK!
LET'S BEAT IT.
HURRY UP, CANELONES!

HEY, AMIGO--
GEORGE
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD!
AND NOW?
TO THE MAESTRO. HE HAS SOME THINGS TO EXPLAIN TO ME.
AND WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?
I DON'T KNOW. TOO MANY COINCIDENCES.
8

THERE! THAT'S THEM IN THAT TAXI!
LET'S GO. WE HAVE TO GET THEM.
HURRY, OR WE'LL LOSE THEM!
CHACRAS
MAIPU
KING
THEY MADE A TURN!
RUN, CANELONES!
9

HE HAS IT!

TAKE IT!
LET'S BEAT IT TO THE MAESTRO'S! IT'S RIGHT HERE.
I'M COMING. I'M COMING.
I DON'T SEE ANYONE. THE FAT ONE GOT AWAY, I THINK.
NOW YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, YOU OLD SCHEMER.
BORGES?

NOT EXACTLY. COME IN, GENTLEMEN.
MY NAME IS CHAMARRA-- "POLVITO" CHAMARRA. MR. BORGES WILL SEE YOU SHORTLY.
HE'S DISCUSSING LITERATURE WITH A FRIEND. IF YOU WOULD CARE TO PUT DOWN YOUR THINGS...
GIVE ME BACK MY BAG, YOU FAT THIEF!
LET GO, DON'T PUSH ME!!
YOU'RE INTERRUPTING MR. BORGES! LET GO!
12

TAKE IT, PUSHY!
IT'S OVER, FAT MAN! YOU CROSSED--
MODA
13

AS YOU CAN SEE, ATTORNEY, MY FRIENDS ARE PEOPLE OF THE HIGHEST INTEGRITY: THEY HAVEN'T LOST THEIR HEAD, DESPITE EVERYTHING.
NO DOUBT: THEY PASSED ALL THE TESTS. GABO WILL APPROVE OF YOUR CHOICE.
WHO ARE THESE GUYS, MAESTRO? WHAT'S GOING ON?
GOOD AFTERNOON, MY EASTERN FRIEND. IT'S A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN AFTER ALL THIS TIME, CANELONES.
IS THIS THE SKULL OF--

YES. IT'S EL ZORZAL'S HEAD: CARLITOS GARDEL. BUT I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ATTORNEY ARCADIO BUCARAMANGA: A FRIEND, CULTURAL ATTACHÉ TO THE EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA IN ARGENTINA, AND, IN SOME WAYS, HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LATEST SUCCESSES.
A PLEASURE TO MEAT YOU, MR. CANELONES. I KNOW OF YOU FROM FRICCIONES, BORGES'S BOOK, BUT I THOUGHT THE MAESTRO EXAGGERATED YOUR VIRTUES. I'M DELIGHTED TO FIND MYSELF MISTAKEN.
MR. CHAMARRA, I THINK YOUR TIME HERE HAS CONCLUDED FOR NOW. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICES.
OF COURSE, COUNSELOR. I'LL GO PICK UP FILOSO, WHO SHOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN HERE.
15

IF FILOSO IS THE SKINNY ONE WITH THE MUSTACHE, I DON'T THINK HE CAN MAKE IT HERE ALONE. YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR HIM.
GENTLEMEN, I CONGRATULATE YOU, I KNOW THE RIGHT PEOPLE WHEN I SEE THEM. I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU SOON.
COME CLOSER, FRIENDS. THESE GENTLEMEN ARE THE BEARERS OF A GREAT QUEST, LONG PUT OFF BY US, THE ARGENTINES: PERRAMUS, CANELONES, ENEMY.
WE HAVE TO RESTORE GARDEL'S SMILE.
16

2 The Lost Smile

ARE YOU SERIOUS, MAESTRO? YOU WERE NEVER A FAN OF GARDEL.
WHAT IS ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT?
WHY "RESTORE GARDEL'S SMILE?"
IT INTERESTS ME, WHEN THE PERSONAL DIMENSION DISSOLVES IN THE COLLECTIVE: THE MYTH AND ITS EFFECT IN THE COMMUNITY. FROM THERE, THE SMILE--
NOW YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME THAT GARDEL WASN'T A GOOD SINGER, BUT A GOOD SMILER?
NO. BUT SEE, CANELONES, IN THE BARS WE HAVE HIS VOICE, STILL LIVING, BUT YOU CAN'T FIND HIS SMILE THERE.
SURE. HE'S MISSING ALL HIS TEETH.
AND OF COURSE, AFTER THE ACCIDENT, THEY IDENTIFIED HIS BODY BY HIS PERFECT TEETH.

EXACTLY: I HAVE IT ALL DOCUMENTED HERE. WHEN GABO ASKED ME TO--
WHO'S THIS GABO? IT COULDN'T BE GABRIEL GAR--
ONE MOMENT, PERRAMUS, I NEED TO EXPLAIN EXACTLY HOW THIS ALL STARTED.
THIS WINTER, THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT INVITED ME TO GIVE A CONFERENCE ON THE 24TH OF JUNE, TO MARK 50 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF GARDEL IN THE PLANE CRASH IN MEDELLÍN. THERE I MET ATTORNEY ARCADIO BUCARAMANGA, WHO IS EXTREMELY ERUDITE IN GARDELIAN MATTERS.
I'M FROM MEDELLÍN, AND I WAS A CHILD WHEN IT HAPPENED. I WITNESSED IT ALL HAPPEN: THE BIRTH OF THE MYTH, THE POPULARITY AND DEVOTION.
LOOK HERE. I'VE COLLECTED NEWSPAPER REPORTS, INVESTIGATIONS, AND HAVE HAD SOME SURPRISING REVELATIONS.

THERE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS THE FACT PERRAMUS MENTIONED: GARDEL'S BODY WAS IDENTIFIED BY HIS PERFECT TEETH.
AND HERE, IN THIS DIAGRAM, THE DETAILS OF THE CRIMINAL DEVASTATION.
a b c d
e f g h i j
YOU MADE THIS DIAGRAM, COUNSELOR, WITH THE SKULL IN YOUR POSSESSION?
NOT EXACTLY. IT'S A DOCUMENT FROM SEPTEMBER 1935. THE DATE IS ON THE BACK.
SO, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'M SAYING THAT WHEN GARDEL'S REMAINS WERE REPATRIATED THE NEXT YEAR, THE BODY MUST HAVE BEEN MUTILATED.
HIS SMILE DESTROYED. BUT TO GO BACK TO THE CONFERENCE IN MEDELLÍN, WHICH WAS ON THIS EXACT TOPIC--
3

TODAY
THE WRITER AND
NOBEL AWARD WINNER
J.L. BORGES
WILL SPEAK
ON THE THEME
ARGENTINA:
"50 YEARS WITHOUT
SMILING"
AND THE LOSS WE COMMEMORATE IS NOT JUST THAT OF A POPULAR SINGER, BUT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A SYMBOL OF SPLENDOR, OF HAPPINESS: GARDEL'S SMILE. IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES, ANGUISHED FOR OUR SISTER NATIONS, ONE OF OUR TASKS, ALONG WITH OTHERS THAT CANNOT BE PUT OFF ANY LONGER, WILL BE TO RESTORE--
--THAT GARDELIAN SMILE. REVIVE IT, SO THAT ARGENTINA AND LATIN AMERICA CAN RETURN, EVEN MYTHICALLY, TO SMILING.
THAT WAS WHEN I APPROACHED THE MAESTRO AND, A LITTLE IN JEST, TOLD HIM THAT THIS TASK WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE: WE'VE SEEN INDICATIONS. WE CHATTED FOR A MOMENT, AND THEN SAID GOODBYE.
WHO ELSE DID YOU MEET IN MEDELLÍN, MAESTRO?
IT WASN'T A PERSON. AT LEAST, NOT DIRECTLY. IT WAS A BOOK I FOUND IN MY HOTEL THAT SAME NIGHT.
THAT INGENIOUS BESTSELLER THAT, THOUGH I KNEW OF IT, I HAD NOT YET READ.
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ
100 YEARS OF SOLITUDE

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE, GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S MOST IMPORTANT BOOK, BY THE OTHER RECENT NOBEL PRIZE WINNER FROM LATIN AMERICA--
EXACTLY. HE LEFT ME A COPY AT THE HOTEL, WITH A DEDICATION IN HIS HANDWRITING. READ IT.
May these hundred years of solitude serve to restore the fifty of sorrow. For you, may you write better every day.
Gabo
Medellín, 6/24/35
6/24/85
GABO! IT WAS GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, LIKE I WAS SAYING.
BUT WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THIS DEDICATION?
I DIDN'T KNOW, AT THE TIME. I PACKED THE BOOK, AND FORGOT ABOUT IT. I ONLY RETURNED TO IT TWO WEEKS AGO, WHEN I READ THAT GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ WAS COMING TO READ FROM HIS NEW BOOK. I DECIDED TO READ IT, AND THERE I DISCOVERED THE MESSAGE.
WHAT MESSAGE?
5

LOOK: HE INSINUATES THAT HIS BOOK, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE, WILL "SERVE"--THAT IS, HELP ME--GUIDE ME TO RESTORE THE FIFTY YEARS OF SORROW. WHAT DID HE MEAN?
May these hundred years of solitude serve to restore the fifty of sorrow. For you, may you write be every day.
IT WAS, OF COURSE, THE THEME OF THE CONFERENCE. UNDERSCORED BY THE TWO DATES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DEDICATION, AFTER THE REFERENCE TO WHAT THEY SAY OF GARDEL: THAT, "EVERY DAY HE SINGS BETTER."
THAT'S IT. WHERE? THE ONLY KEYS WERE THE NUMBERS OF THE DATES.
YOU DEDUCED THAT THERE WERE CLUES IN THIS BOOK.
100 YEARS OF SOLITUDE
6/24/35
6/24/85
I BEGAN TO TRY, ASSUMING THE YEARS 35 AND 85 INDICATED PAGE NUMBERS. LET'S GO TO THE BOOK.
LOOK: PAGE 35. AND WHAT IS THE LINE?
I ASSUMED IT WOULD BE THE CONSTANT IN THE DATES: SIX.
35
THAT IS, THE SIXTH LINE--
AND 24, THAT IS, THE TWENTY-FOURTH LINE--

100 YEARS OF SOLITUDE 85

But underneath it all she could not conceive that the boy the gypsies took away was the same lout who would eat half a suckling pig for lunch and whose flatulence withered the flowers. Something similar took place with the rest of the family. Amaranta could not conceal the repugnance that she felt at the table because of his bestial belching. Arcadio, who never knew the secret of their relationship, scarcely answered the questions that he asked with the obvious idea of gaining his affection. Aureliano tried to relive the times when they slept in the same room, tried to revive the complicity of childhood, but Jose Arcadio had forgotten about it, because life at sea had saturated his memory with too many things to remember. Only Rebeca succumbed to the first impact. The day that she saw him pass by her bedroom she thought that Pietro Crespi was a sugary dandy next to that proto-male whose volcanic breathing could be heard all over the house. She tried to get near him under any pretext.

On a certain occasion. Jose Arcadio looked at her body with shameless attention, and said to her, "You're a woman, little sister." Rebeca lost control of herself. She went back to eating earth and the whitewash on the walls with the avidity of previous days, and she sucked her finger with so much anxiety that she developed a callus on her thumb. She vomited up a green liquid with dead leeches in it. She spent nights awake shaking with fever, fighting against delirium, waiting until the house shook with the return of [illegible]. One afternoon, when everyone was having [illegible] no longer resist and went to his bedroom [illegible] in the hammock that he had [illegible] hawser. She was so impressed [illegible] that she felt an impulse to [illegible] didn't know you were here." But [illegible] to wake anyone up. "Come here," he said [illegible] stopped beside the hammock in an icy sweat, feeling [illegible] ing in her intestines, while Jose Arcadio stroked her ankles with the tips of his fingers, then her calves, then her thighs, murmuring [illegible]

WE FOUND THEM BOTH. WHAT NOW?

100 YEARS OF SOLITUDE 85

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COMPARE THE TWO SIXTH LINES. WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

THE NAME ARCADIO!

EXACTLY. IT WAS AN INDICATION TO GO TO THE ONLY ARCADIO I KNEW, THE LAWYER ARCADIO BUCARAMANGA, WHO HAD GIVEN ME HIS CARD IN MEDELLÍN. I KNEW HE WAS IN BUENOS AIRES.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE 24TH LINES?
THE LINE ON PAGE 35 CONFIRMED THE SUBJECT AS "ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS."
ONE HUNDRED, PLUS FIFTY. AND THE LINE ON PAGE 85, I LEAVE IT TO YOU. IT REMAINS A MYSTERY TO ME: "SHAKING WITH FEVER, FIGHTING AGAINST DELIRIUM, WAITING UNTIL--" I DON'T KNOW.
AND WHAT HAPPENED THEN?
BORGES CALLED ME TEN DAYS AGO, AND EXPLAINED HIS DEDUCTIONS TO ME. I ADDED MATCHING DATA. THE SAME NIGHT AS THE CONFERENCE IN MEDELLÍN, SOMEONE LEFT AN ENVELOPE WITH MY NAME ON IT. INSIDE WAS THE DIAGRAM I SHOWED YOU, AND A NOTE THAT SAID: "AN EVIL HOUR FOR ANYONE WHO DOES NOT LISTEN TO THE SINGER, THE MAKER OF HIS DESTINY." SIGNED, "G."
THE MESSAGE UNITED TWO WORKS, BY BORGES AND GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ: "IN EVIL HOUR" AND "THE MAKER." IT ALSO REFERS TO THE SINGER.

BUT ALL THIS I ONLY SAW AFTER I SPOKE WITH HIM.
AND I ENDED UP UNDERSTANDING, WHEN I SPOKE TO HIM--
WHO?
CÍA MÁRQUEZ
OF SOLITU E
HIM. WE WERE ON THE TELEPHONE LAST MONDAY, AND HE CONFIRMED MY SUSPICIONS.
WHAT A RIOT!
AT THESE HEIGHTS, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING.
I DO. GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ IS INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF GARDEL'S LOST TEETH, AND GOT THE INFORMATION. WHEN HE LEARNED ABOUT THE MAESTRO, HE THOUGHT, PERHAPS, HE MIGHT KNOW THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO TAKE ON THE JOB. AND HE PUT US TO THE TEST. FIRST BORGES AND BUCARAMANGA. THEN, US.
9

SO ALL THIS WAS A LITTLE GAME, WITH THE PACKAGE, THE BAGS-- WELL, OK. BUT, WHAT DOES HE KNOW THAT'S SO IMPORTANT?
HE KNOWS WHERE ALL THE MISSING TEETH ARE.
AND WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM US?
FOR YOU TO RECOVER THEM, ONE BY ONE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH.
10

ALL RIGHT, I UNDERSTAND. WE ARE TO TAKE ON THE ASSIGNMENT, REPAIR THE SYMBOLIC SMILE OF ARGENTINA, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, BUT--WHAT DOES HE GET OUT OF IT?
TRUTHFULLY, VERY LITTLE, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE, AND THE VALUES HE INTENDS TO RESTORE.
THIS MONDAY HE ARRIVES IN SANTA MARÍA TO PRESENT A FREE ACCOUNT OF AN ENSLAVED HISTORY, HIS LATEST NOVEL.
AND WE'LL USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH HIM. HEE HEE HEE.

HE WILL FINANCE THE COSTS OF THE INVESTIGATION, IN EXCHANGE FOR THE UNIVERSAL RIGHTS TO THE STORY. HE'S THINKING OF WRITING A NOVEL ABOUT OUR ADVENTURES IN FINDING GARDEL'S TEETH.
IT WILL BE A BEST-SELLER!
OF THAT, I'M SURE.
BUT WILL IT END WELL?
12

3 Services Rendered

BOOKSTORE
tout de suite
BAZAR
AHOY!
"FREE ACCOUNT OF AN ENSLAVED HISTORY"
IT'S A GOOD TITLE.
IT'S HERE.
SO MANY PEOPLE!
BAR BARO
I LIKED HIS LAST BOOK MORE THAN--
--SOLD MORE THAN 150,000 COPIES.
I DON'T KNOW HIM. THEY SAY HE'S NICE.
I BROUGHT IT FOR HIM TO SIGN.

YOU THINK WE'LL SEE HIM?
YES. SHOW IT TO HIM, AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
SIGN IT TO ME, PLEASE!
CAN YOU INSCRIBE THIS TO ME?
ONE AT A TIME. I'LL GET TO EVERYONE.
WHO SHOULD I DEDICATE THIS TO?
TO SILVIA, PLEASE.
HERE YOU GO.
THANKS.
MAKE IT OUT TO ME, PLEASE?
WHAT'S THE NAME? BUT WHAT'S IN HERE?
2

A PHOTO OF--
YES.
OF GARDEL.
WILL YOU SIGN IT, OR NOT?
NICE TO MEET YOU. HOW IS THE OLD MAESTRO?
VERY GOOD. HE DIDN'T COME SO THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY PUBLICITY, HE SAID.
AH. IT'S YOU. I WAS WAITING FOR YOU.

To my compadres C. & P. Gabo
HA, HA! OLD REACTIONARY! TOO BAD!
I'LL MEET YOU AT THE HOTEL AT FIVE. THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE. THE JOB BEGINS TONIGHT.
AND THE IDEA IS SIMPLE, FRIENDS: I KNOW WHERE THE TEN TEETH ARE, SCATTERED AROUND THE WORLD, AND YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN GATHER THEM.
HÉCTOR "POLVITO" CHAMARRA, FILOSO GÓMEZ, AND THE ATTORNEY ARCADIO BUCARAMANGA HELPED ME TEST IT.
YOU ARE EXCEEDINGLY YOUNG, BUT I THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TASK OF RECOVERY BEGINS TONIGHT.

EXACTLY. FROM THE INFORMATION I RECEIVED--FROM MY GREAT-UNCLE ARQUIMEDES MILHOJAS--A MUNICIPAL OFFICER IN MEDELLÍN AT THE TIME PARTICIPATED DIRECTLY IN THE MARKING AND MARKETING OF GARDEL'S TEETH.
MARKING AND MARKETING?
OF COURSE. TO AVOID COUNTERFEITS, EACH PIECE WAS ENGRAVED WITH THE INITIALS C.G. AS PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY. AND EACH TOOTH HAS ITS OWN NAME, THE WAY THAT FAMOUS DIAMONDS DO. MY INVESTIGATORS DISCOVERED THAT, AS OF NOW, 1985, THE INFERIOR LEFT INCISOR, KNOWN AS "EL MOROCHO," IS IN BUENOS AIRES.
AND WHO HAS IT?
A TERRIBLE MAN WHO YOU'LL REMEMBER: GENERAL RAIMUNDO FRAGOTE.
HE ESCAPED JAIL AND PUNISHMENT BECAUSE HE SPENT THE LAST YEARS OF THE DICTATORSHIP ABROAD. HOWEVER, HE'S STILL CONSPIRING. TONIGHT, EVEN, HE'S SPEAKING AT A DINNER FOR A GROUP OF EX-OFFICERS: "WE'LL BE BACK."
AND YOU'LL BE THERE. IT'S ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED.
5

GENERAL FRAGOTE: WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR DESSERT, MAY WE HEAR YOUR GUIDING WISDOM.
--SO NEEDED IN THIS TIME OF CONFUSION AND ANARCHY FOR THE REPUBLIC.
WE MUST BE ATTENTIVE, COLLEAGUES. THE FATHERLAND COULD CALL US BACK AT ANY MOMENT.
BUT IF WE ARE NOT CALLED, WE'LL GO ANYWAY!
6

THAT'S RIGHT, GENERAL!
HAHAHAHA
WE'LL GO ANYWAY, ABSOLUTELY!
READY?
WITH WHAT WAS IN HIS FOOD, HE'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM IN TEN MINUTES.
WE'LL BE BACK
DID YOU SEE THE TOOTH?
YEAH. IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY.
HE'S WEARING IT AMONG THE OTHER MEDALS.
I THINK THE DRUG CARTEL GAVE IT TO HIM WHEN HE WAS MILITARY ATTACHÉ AT THE BOGOTÁ EMBASSY.

"AN ORDER OF MERIT IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANT SERVICES RENDERED."
YES. WEAPONS AND PLANES.
BECAUSE OURS HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ATTITUDE OF SERVICE. AND AFTER, OUR ENEMIES ASK, WHAT DO WE SERVE?
HELL, YES.
WE'LL BE BACK.
THEY'LL SEE.
AND NOW, I GIVE THE FLOOR TO GENERAL RAIMUNDO FRAGOTE!

AH. GOD, I'M SHITTING!
HE'S IN THE BATHROOM!
DON'T LET ANYONE IN!
I'M SHITTING, I'M SHITTING! AH!
PLEASE, GENTLE-MEN, WAIT.
GENERAL FRAGOTE IS SUFFERING FROM A SLIGHT INTESTINAL INDISPOSITION. I IMPLORE YOU TO WAIT A FEW MINUTES.

AHHHH
NOW YOU'LL REALLY SHIT, SOLDIER.
DEATH TO CIVILIANS
PULL THE FUCKIN CHAIN
General Squat Succo
this sacred place so much goes to
SO MANY SHITTY MEDALS!
--THE FEELING OF THE MOMENT--
SPEAKING OF JUST SERVICE--
--AND HE ISN'T LOOSENING UP
COLLEAGUES: IF THERE'S A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE, PLEASE FETCH HIM. THE GENERAL REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE.
10

A DOCTOR!
DON'T PUSH, DON'T PUSH!
AIR! AIR!
EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN, EXCUSE ME.
WHAT HAPPENED? WAS THERE AN INCIDENT?
AH, HERE COMES A COLONEL!
WHAT HAPPENED, SIR?
WHY ALL THE FUSS?
VERY SIMPLE, ESTEEMED REPORTERS. ONCE AGAIN--
--GENERAL FRAGOTE SHIT HIMSELF.

AND BEFORE THE REPORTERS COULD REACT, WE WERE GONE. WE HAD LEFT THE CAR WAITING ON THE WAY BACK, AS GABO ARRANGED.
I TOOK OFF THAT UNCOMFORTABLE UNIFORM.
AND HERE WE ARE.
THIS IS "EL MOROCHO," FOR SURE, MAESTRO.
G.G.
IT HAS CARLOS GARDEL'S MARK. LET'S SEE IF--
12

PERFECTLY. ONE TENTH OF THE SMILE, RESTORED.
VERY GOOD. TOMORROW I RETURN TO COLOMBIA, BUT BEFORE I GO I'D LIKE TO REVIEW ALL THE DETAILS OF THIS FIRST ADVENTURE. DON'T FORGET MY INTEREST IN THE STORY.
IT WILL BE A SUCCESS, YOUNG MAN. AND IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE A TITLE, MAY I SUGGEST: TOOTH FOR TOOTH.
NOT BAD, MAESTRO. BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT. AND NOW, GET READY, THERE ARE SEATS RESERVED FOR YOU ON MY SAME FLIGHT TO BOGOTÁ.
WE'RE GOING TO COLOMBIA?
NO. YOU'LL CONTINUE TO LAS VEGAS. THERE, FRANK SINATRA IS WAITING FOR YOU.

Under
My
Skin

*ONLY LEGUISAMO! SHOUT THE KIDS OF THE BARRIO!

TO FRANKIE'S PALACE, PLEASE.
TONIGHT, SINATRA IS OPENING HIS OWN HOTEL AND CASINO. TO COMPETE WITH CAESAR'S PALACE, THE COLOSSUS OF LAS VEGAS.
AND WE'RE ATTENDING?
Tropica
THAT'S RIGHT. GABO SPOKE ON THE PHONE WITH HIM, AND TOLD HIM HE WAS SENDING THREE MEN TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE TOOTH. WE'LL MEET HIM AT TEN.
CANNING ST
SIF
IT'S FUNNY: LEGUISAMO USED "EL ZORZAL" AS A GOOD LUCK CHARM DURING ALL HIS RACES ON THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TRACKS. WHEN HE RETIRED--
--IN THE SEVENTIES, HE GAVE IT TO THE SINGER PALITO ORTEGA, WHO WAS LIKE A SON TO HIM, BELIEVING THAT HE LEFT IT IN GOOD HANDS. IT WAS USELESS--
BECAUSE PALITO WAS OUT OF TUNE. DESPITE GARDEL... HA.
Frankie's Palace

WHEN SINATRA CAME TO SANTA MARÍA IN 1981, PALITO ORTEGA PRODUCED HIS CONCERT AND IT WAS A DISASTER. HE WAS LEFT TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN DEBT, AND ENDED UP PAYING FOR IT--
WITH GARDEL'S TOOTH.
SINCE 1982, HE'S HAD IT AND LOVES IT: SINATRA ALWAYS ADMIRED GARDEL.
WILL HE PART WITH IT?
WE HAVE, IN ADDITION TO FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, SOME ARGUMENTS THAT WILL HELP CONVINCE HIM.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

MR. SINATRA IS WAITING FOR US. WE CAME FROM SOUTH AMERICA, AND HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT TEN.
HERE IS OUR INTRODUCTION.
HMMMM...
WHAT DO YOU THINK, JOE? I DON'T WANT THE BOSS--
LET THEM THROUGH, JOE! LET THEM THRO-UGH!

THAT VOICE. THAT'S HIS VOICE!
GREETINGS, FRIENDS FROM LATIN AMERICA!
I THINK I KNOW WHAT'S IN THAT LETTER. GABO ALREADY TOLD ME A BIT.
A SHAME, LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS, THAT YOU--
--ARRIVED TOO LATE.
5

OUR APPOINTMENT WAS FOR TEN O'CLOCK, AND WE THINK THE OFFER IS REASONABLE.
BUT THEY SHOWED UP FIRST.
AND WITH THE SAME OFFER.
TRAITOR.
WE MEET AGAIN, AMIGO.
SUCH IGNORANCE, GENTLEMEN! IT'S NOT DRAMATIC. THOSE ARE THE RULES OF THE MARKET, FREE COMPETITION, HEALTHY CAPITALIST BIDDING.
WE HAVE GABO'S PROPOSAL.
WE GOT HERE FIRST.

I'M SORRY TO HAVE MISLED YOU, GENTLEMEN, BUT NEITHER OF THESE PROPOSALS INTERESTS ME. CHAMARRA'S FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS--
--AND THE PARDON FROM THE CHARGES AGAINST ME FOR ILLEGAL GAMBLING IN COLOMBIA THAT PREVENTS ME FROM ENTERING THE COUNTRY, THEY'RE NOT WORTH IT. I CAN GET IT FOR LESS.
AND THE FIFTY THOUSAND AND THE BLANK CONTRACT FOR TOURING THE SOUTH PACIFIC, THAT'S NOT EITHER, PERRAMUS. THAT MARKET IS DEAD, LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS.
BUT I AM A GENTLEMAN AND I HAVE GARDEL "UNDER MY SKIN," AS COLE PORTER'S SONG GOES. AND SO, I'LL GIVE YOU ANOTHER CHANCE.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO PAY MORE THAN MONEY FOR "EL ZORZAL?"

WHATEVER IT TAKES.
GO ON, SINATRA.
YOU KNOW THAT MY PASSION IS THE GAME. SO, WE'LL MAKE A WAGER. YOU'LL FACE EACH OTHER.
ONE ON ONE IN THREE ROUNDS. WHOEVER WINS WILL GET TO NEGOTIATE WITH ME FOR "EL ZORZAL." ALRIGHT?
ALL RIGHT.
FINE. WHAT ARE THE RULES?
AH, THE RULES. THE HOUSE MAKES THEM, AS ALWAYS.
I'LL EXPECT YOU IN AN HOUR AT THE CASINO, AFTER MY REHEARSAL. GOOD DAY.
8

WHEN SOMEBODY LOVES YOU...
ALL THE WAY...
WE SHOULDN'T HAVE ACCEPTED.
WE HAD NO CHOICE.
WE CAN'T DO LESS THAN THOSE TRAITORS.
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN. HERE IT IS. I GUARANTEE YOU FAIRNESS. BUT IF SOMEONE DOESN'T FOLLOW THE RULES, HE WON'T LEAVE HERE ALIVE.
9

JUST BASED ON THE PROPOSALS YOU MADE TO ME, GENTLEMEN, I HAVE SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION TO PREVENT YOU FROM LEAVING NEVADA.
TO BEGIN, CHAMARRA AND CANELONES WILL ARM-WRESTLE.
A TRADITIONAL TEST.
READY?
GO!

ONE TO NOTHING!
NICE WORK, FRIEND!
GOOD. NOW FILOSO GÓMEZ AND PERRAMUS WILL COMPETE IN PURE CHANCE.
TAKE THE FIRST CARD, PERRAMUS.
TURN IT OVER.
77

NOW YOU, GOMEZ, TAKE THE NEXT.
GOMEZ WINS. ONE TO ONE, GENTLEMEN.
YOU FIXED IT SO WE WOULD TIE. WHAT IS IT YOU'RE AFTER?
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RULES, YOU KNOW, PERRAMUS, MY FRIEND--
IT'S ALL THE SAME. THIS MAKES THE COMPETITION BETWEEN THE ENEMY AND THE "VIPER" LÓPEZ MORE INTERESTING. THEY'LL MEASURE UP AGAINST EACH OTHER.
BUT HOW CAN THEY COMPETE IN HEIGHT? YOU CAN SEE THE "VIPER" IS TALLE--

WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT HEIGHT? WHAT THEY'LL MEASURE IS ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY ... GENTLEMEN.
OPEN YOUR FLIES AND TAKE OUT ALL YOU'VE GOT.
ONTO THE GAME TABLE-- WE'LL SEE WHO'S BETTER ARMED.
WE'VE LOST. DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY CALL LÓPEZ "THE VIPER?"
I KNOW. BUT THAT'S NOT ALL I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
LET'S GO, ENEMY. DRAW YOUR WEAPON.
¡BAAH!
HMMM. ANYWAY.

LET'S SEE, LÓPEZ, THAT FAMOUS SNAKE.
WILD!
MY GOD!
LET'S GO, JOE. MAKE SURE.
THEY'RE GOING TO MEASURE.
THE GAME IS OURS.

LET ME SEE. HOLD STILL.
LOOK OUT, VIPER!

HOLD STILL, FRANKIE!
MURDERING SONS OF BITCHES!!
NO ONE MOVE, OR I'LL CUT HIM! NOW WE'LL MEASURE WHAT HAS TO BE MEASURED.
16

OH, IT CAN'T BE!
ENEMY IS BIGGER!
THAT'S MY FRIEND.
VIPER, YOU SHRANK. VIPER--IT'S SCARED.
IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T BE!
IF ONLY MY GIRL COULD SEE THIS.
BE A GOOD LOSER, POLVITO, AND TAKE CARE OF THESE GUYS, WHO THINK WE'RE ALL THE SAME.
C'MON, LET'S GO.
JUST GO. WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.

INSIDE, FRANKIE.
WE HAVE TO FINISH THE NEGOTIATION.
WE WANT "EL ZORZAL," FRANKIE.
WHERE DO YOU KEEP IT?
I CAN'T GIVE IT UP, LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS, EVEN IF I WANTED TO.
I WON'T TELL. YOU'LL HAVE TO NEGOTIATE, OR PRY THE SECRET--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THAT WON'T GET US ANYWHERE.

HE HAS IT HERE.
LET'S SEE, I THINK IT'S THIS ONE.
ALL DONE, BOYS. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FRANK WILL NOT BE PERFORMING TONIGHT AT THE OPENING OF FRANKIE'S PALACE.
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
SIMPLE. HE GAVE US THE CLUE WHEN HE SAID HE HAD GARDEL--
--UNDER HIS SKIN, LIKE IN THE SONG BY COLE PORTER: "I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN." THAT'S JUST WHERE HE HAD IT, UNDER HIS SKIN. IMPLANTED.
70

ALTHOUGH THIS ACCIDENT PREVENTS ME FROM BEING WITH YOU TONIGHT, I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU ALL HERE.
SMILE, FRANKIE, SMILE.
YOUR SUPPORT COMPENSATES FOR THE LOSSES I'VE SUFFERED TODAY.
WELL, THANKS TO THE ENEMY--OR AN IMPORTANT PART OF HIM--WE HAVE ANOTHER ONE OF GARDEL'S TEETH RECOVERED.
YES. BUT HOW DID YOU REALIZE THAT THEY WERE GOING TO KILL THE WINNER? AND IT WASN'T ME, EXACTLY.
21

I REMEMBERED A STORY I'D READ.
"NO SÉ SI HE SIDO CLARO," OR "I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE BEEN CLEAR," IT WAS CALLED. THERE WAS A SIMILAR CONTEST IN IT.
ONE OF BORGES'S?
AND IT ENDED THE SAME WAY?
NO, IT'S NOT BY BORGES, IT'S FONTANARROSA. AND IT DIDN'T END EXACTLY LIKE THAT. READ IT, ENEMY. BUT I DON'T THINK YOU CAN EVER COMPETE AGAIN.
Frankfurt Palace
22

5 The Beginning of Myth

COMMANDER--
THERE'S A CALL ON YOUR DIRECT LINE FROM BOGOTÁ.
TRANSFER IT OVER.
HELLO, GABO? HOW ARE THINGS, MY FRIEND?
AND WHAT THIS THAT'S SO URGENT? ARGENTINES, YOU SAY?
AH. HOW INTERESTING! AND WHY ARE YOU SO INVESTED IN ALL THIS IF YOU'RE NOT ARGENTIN--? YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.

OF COURSE, FRIEND. INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM. IF WE HAD MADE NATIONALITY AN ISSUE IN THE MOUNTAINS, AS WITH--
YES, GABO, MY FRIEND. IT'S A REASONABLE OFFER. WE'LL NEGOTIATE WITH THE THREE OF THEM WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN LAS VEGAS. WE'LL SEND THEM A CONTACT IN MIAMI. OF COURSE.
WHAT DID YOU SAY THE NAMES OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE?
PERRAMUS.
TAKE THIS. FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE CAMILO HEREDIA TORRES.

I'M THE ENEM--
FROM NOW ON, RAFAEL GÓMEZ FUENTES.
CANELONES.
LOOK HERE. YOU'RE REINALDO SOSA LÓPEZ.
IN TWO HOURS, YOU'LL BOARD THE SEAPLANE HEADING FOR CUBA. THERE'S NO NEED FOR PRECAUTIONS. THESE ARE DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS FROM OUR OWN COMMANDER, FIDEL.
YOU'LL BE MET HERE AND TRANSFERRED DISCRETELY TO HAVANA.
U.S.A.
Havana
Caribbean Sea
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THERE'S SO MUCH MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE. IT'S JUST A LEGAL TRANSACTION.
3

I DON'T KNOW, FRIENDS. BUT I WON'T BE AT EASE UNTIL I'VE GOTTEN YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION: THE MUSEUM OF THE REVOLUTION IN HAVANA.
THE DIRECTOR IS WAITING FOR YOU, COMMANDER.
HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED THE PIECE WE'RE AFTER, COMRADE DIRECTOR?
4

YES, COMRADE COMMANDER. IN THIS LITTLE BOX. DO YOU RECOGNIZE IT?
YES. CHE ALWAYS CARRIED IT WITH HIM: THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN IN THE MOUNTAINS AND AFTERWARDS. HOW DID IT COME TO BE AT THE MUSEUM?
IT WAS AMONG HIS BELONGINGS WHEN HE FELL IN BOLIVIA. WE RETRIEVED THEM, ALONG WITH HIS DIARY AND A FEW OTHERS THINGS.
IT HAS HIS INITIALS.
OPEN IT.
5

WE'RE HERE. YOU CAN SEE THE SHORE.
WE SHOULD CHECK TO SEE WHAT'S IN THE BRIEFCASE. GABO ISN'T TRUST-WORTHY. OPEN IT, PERRAMUS.
IF THEY'RE JUST PERSONAL LETTERS, PURELY OF SENTIMENTAL VALUE, AS HE SAYS THEY ARE, THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE EXCEPT OUR SUSPICIONS.
PREPARE FOR THE DESCENT.
6

INSTEAD OF BEING CURIOUS, WE SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE BOX WE HAVE TO RETRIEVE. IN THE PHOTO, YOU CAN SEE--
PERRAMUS-- CLEARLY, THAT THE INITIALS-- HEY.
HANG ON!
KEEP CALM, WE'VE ALREADY MADE IT.
WHAT HAPPENED?
WE'RE FALLING.
HERE THEY ARE. EVERYTHING IN ORDER.

WE'RE HERE, FRIENDS.
EVERYTHING IN ORDER?
EVERYTHING'S IN ORDER, FRIENDS. THANKS.
THERE ARE THE MEN WHO'LL TAKE US TO HAVANA.
EVERYTHING HURTS.

HEREDIA?
YES.
GÓMEZ FUENTES.
YES, I THINK SO.
SOSA LÓPEZ?
WHY NOT.
THE PLAN HAS BEEN MODIFIED SLIGHTLY. THE TRANSACTION WILL GO A LITTLE FASTER.
HAND ME THE BRIEFCASE WITH THE DOCUMENTS, HERDIA.
9

WHAT DOCUMENTS? IF THEY'RE ALL PERSONAL LETTERS--
GOOD, VERY GOOD. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
NOW, MOVE.
NO, NOT THIS WAY. THE WAY YOU CAME.

LET'S GO. FASTER.
RUN. THEY MIGHT SHOOT!
SWIM OUT TO SEA. SWIM, SWIM!
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
IN THAT DIRECTION, TOWARD EUROPE, I THINK.
AMIGO... IS THIS EXILE? EH? ANSWER.

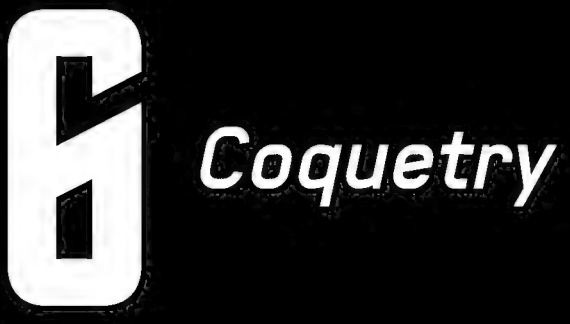
IT'S GABO'S MEN. THE COAST GUARD PICKED THEM UP.
SEND THEM IN, SEND THE MIN-- I THOUGHT THEY WEREN'T COMING.
WELCOME, FRIENDS.
DESPITE ALL OUR PRECAUTIONS, WE WERE BETRAYED, AND WE COULDN'T--
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, PERRAMUS, MY FRIEND. DON'T WORRY. WHEN GABO TOLD ME YOU WERE BRINGING PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN LETTERS FROM CHE FOR THE MUSEUM OF THE REVOLUTION TO EXCHANGE FOR A SIMPLE PILLBOX, I GOT AN IDEA.
LET US EXPLAIN, COMMANDER, WHAT HAPPENED.
HOLD ON, CANELONES, MY FRIEND.
12

HAVE A CIGAR. THAT WAY YOU'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR MOUTH WHILE YOU LISTEN TO ME. I TEND TO BE A BIT LONGWINDED, FRIENDS.
BUT WHAT WAS YOUR IDEA?
THE SUBJECT INTERESTED ME. WE KNEW THAT CHE HAD WRITTEN MANY LETTERS FROM CAMP, AND THAT THEY HAD BEEN INTERCEPTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL A BLOW TO THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION THAT IS ALWAYS STALKING US. AND SO, I LEAKED THE INFORMATION THAT THE PAPERS WERE COMING--
AND THE CONTRA BIT--YOU USED US FOR *BAIT.*
FAKE HOW?
PERHAPS. BUT YOU HAVEN'T TOLD THE WHOLE TRUTH, EITHER. SO, WE SENT THEM WITH *FAKE* PAPERS.

OF COURSE THE REAL PAPERS WERE IN THE PLANE. MY COMRADES SWITCHED BRIEFCASES DURING THE DESCENT. WAS IT FUN?
THAT'S WHY THEY SENT US ALONE, WE COULD HAVE--
RUM?
THE REST IS SIMPLE: WE LET THEM TAKE THOSE SEEMINGLY VALUABLE DOCUMENTS. WE FOLLOWED THEM WITH THE PLANE, AND CAUGHT ABOUT HALF A DOZEN OF THEM IN CAMAGÜEY. WITH THE FUCKING CIA! ¡SALUD!
¡SALUD!
AND NOW, EXPLAIN TO ME: WHY SO MUCH INTEREST IN THIS LITTLE BOX OF CHE'S?
BECAUSE IT'S NOT CHE'S.

OF COURSE, IT IS. I MYSELF SAW HIM WITH IT. AND WE HAVE THE PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS POSSESSIONS AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, AND--
WE HAVE IT TOO, COMMANDER. IN THE PHOTO OF THE BELONGINGS OF CARLOS GARDEL, WHEN HE DIED IN MEDELLÍN, IS THAT SAME BOX. LOOK.
IT'S NOT CHE GUEVARA BUT CARLOS GARDEL. CHE ACQUIRED IT IN COLUMBIA WHILE TRAVELING THROUGH AMERICA BEFORE JOINING YOU. THERE ARE DETAILS--
HERE, WITH A SMALL ENGRAVER, HE TRANSFORMED GARDEL'S MONOGRAM INTO HIS, THE "C" INTO AN "E." NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE IN STROKE.
YOU'RE CRAZY COLLECTORS! YOU'VE EARNED IT. HERE, FRIENDS, TAKE IT. BUT WHY IS IT WORTH SO MUCH?
IT'S NOT THE BOX, BUT WHAT'S IN IT.
IT'S EMPTY.

WELL, YES, FRIEND. WE THREW AWAY THE CONTENTS TODAY: SOME RIBBONS, AN OLD TOOTH.
COMRADE COMMANDER! YOU THREW AWAY ONE OF GARDEL'S TEETH! THAT CHE KEPT FOR FIFTEEN YEARS.
WE DIDN'T KNOW, COMRADE.
WHERE DID YOU THROW IT?
WHERE'S THE TRASH?
LOOK, FRIEND, THERE'S A ROOM IN THE BASEMENT WHERE ALL THE DAY'S TRASH GETS BROUGHT, AND IT SHOULD BE--
THANK YOU, COMMANDER.
WHAT A WASTE!!
IF MEN WOULD PUT SO MUCH EFFORT INTO CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY, INSTEAD OF THESE THINGS, MAYBE HISTORY WOULD BE DIFFERENT.
16


Coquetry

ANCHORED IN PARIS--
AND SO FAR FROM HOME.
WAITING, IN THIS COLD, SINCE DAWN.
A SIGNAL. WE'RE ALWAYS WAITING FOR A SIGNAL.
GABO TOLD US TO WAIT HERE.
LISTEN!

* MY BELOVED BUENOS AIRES, WHEN I RETURN TO SEE YOU! ** THERE WILL BE NO MORE PAIN OR FORGETTING!" ***THE LITTLE WINDOW ON THE STREET WHERE I WAS BORN! **** WAS THE SENTINEL OF MY LOVE'S PROMISES!

FOR WHO?
I'M NOT SURE. FRANCÉS AT COQUETTE.
LET'S BE LESS DIRECT. THERE MUST BE OTHER CLUES, OTHER HIDDEN MESSAGES. I SUGGEST WE EXPLORE THOSE, TOO.
Château Antigue
vin sec. le bateau ivre s.a.
rue de Mysteres 14. PARIS
LIKE THIS STRANGE ADDRESS.
Cruzade
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE THIRD WORLD
RUE ALLAN POE, 19 PARIS.
AND THE NAME OF THIS STRANGE ORGANIZATION IS PRINTED ON THE BACK OF THE PAPER USED FOR THE MESSAGE. IT CAN'T BE COINCIDENCE.
WE'LL EACH TAKE ONE CLUE. IN TWELVE HOURS, LET'S MEET BACK HERE WITH WHATEVER INFORMATION WE'VE GATHERED.
La Coquette
3

Chateu Antique
في ذكرى الثورة
ملة للقا
مع قائد الامة.. نتابع معركة
القائد المفدي تلقى المئات من بر
ئد الاسدا
البناء والتحرير
قيات التهنئة
المجد والفخار
ليوم
PLEASE.
MONSIEUR, S'IL VOUS PLAIT--
4

SEÑORITA. UMMM... MADAME.
DOMINIQUE LE PERA
secretaire
I'M NOT AN ARAB HERE WITH A QUESTION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS. I'M URUGUAYAN, AND I WANT TO KNOW IF YOU ARE A RELATIVE OF ALFREDO LE PERA--
--WHO WROTE THE LYRICS FOR CARLOS GARDEL'S TANGOS. BECAUSE IF YOU ARE, I--
قوميّة
مَع قائد الأمة.. نتابع مَعركا
القائد المفدى يتلقى المئات من بَر
خططتم لأمتنا أروع صفحات
لترتفع رايات النصر فوق كا
كلمة قو
SHE DOESN'T SPEAK SPANISH. I DO, I'M FROM MELILLA. BUT I DON'T SPEAK FRENCH. WE COMMUNICATE IN ARABIC. I EXPLAINED WHAT YOU SAID, BUT SHE DOESN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND.
I'M LOOKING FOR MEMORIES ABOUT A TANGO SINGER, CARLOS GARDEL. AND SHE SEEMS TO BE RELATED TO ALFREDO LE PERA, HIS SONGWRITER.
5

الزعبي بَحث
في ذكرى
المجد والفخار
ارض عَربيّة
Cruzade
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
RATATAAA
RATATAAA-AAA.
RATATA
MERDE!
GET DOWN!
KEEP FRANCE WHITE
CRAC!
6

MERCI BEAUCOUP, MONSIEUR CANELONES.
مجلس الوزراء سمى آيات الله
ملة للقائد كلمة
في ذكرى القائد
SHE'S VERY GRATEFUL.
DOMINIQUE WANTS US TO HELP UNMASK THOSE RIGHT-WINGERS. COME WITH US.
ASK HER IF SHE KNOWS--
NOW, PUT THIS ON.
WHERE ARE WE GOING? ASK HER IF SHE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT GARDEL'S TEETH.
الدكتور سليمان وداع

ULTIMATELY, THE TERRORISTS OF WHITE FRANCE TEND TO ATTACK ARABS ON THE METRO. BUT WE NEED PROOF.
DOMINIQUE, PLEASE--
RESTEZ ICI!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
STAY HERE!
GOOD LUCK!
WHAT?
8

NOW!

CLICK
10

Click
YOU WANT MORE?
SHE'S VERY GRATEFUL. SHE ADMIRES YOU GREATLY.
الزعبي بَحث والو أوجه التعاون
مجلس الوزراء استعرض منجزا سمى آيات التقدير للقائد ا بان عن مسيرة عام ٨

الإعلان عن قيام
لفصائل القوى
DOMINIQUE, TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT ME TO KNOW. IT'S GETTING LATE.
مع قائد الأمة.. نتا
القائد المفدى يتلقى لك
لاحتفالات بذكرى الثورة الم
شعبنا تعاهد القائد الأسد
DOMINIQUE AND THE WHOLE CRUZADE ARE VERY GRATEFUL, CANELONES. YOU'VE HELPED US IDENTIFY ONE OF THE LEADERS OF WHITE FRANCE.
BUT NOW WE MUST PART FOR A FEW HOURS. DOMINIQUE WILL LEAVE YOU AT HER GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE. WE'RE GOING THERE.
يدة
لة النضا
الخد
EVERY-THING IS IN ORDER.
BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF SHE--
12

AU'VOIR, MON PETIT URUGUAYEN.
جيدة لة النضا
DON'T LEAVE ME.
COME IN, YOUNG MAN. MY GRANDDAUGHTER WILL BE BACK IN A FEW HOURS.
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. SHE TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID.
YOU SPEAK SPANISH, SEÑORA.
CALL ME COQUETTE, THAT'S WHAT I WAS CALLED IN MY YOUTH, ANYWAY.
COQUETTE! I THINK I'M LOOKING FOR YOU!
BAL DU MOULIN ROUGE
Coquette
Paris
13

DOMINIQUE TOLD ME SHE'S LOOKING FOR YOU, CANELONES. I THINK THESE PHOTOS WILL INTEREST YOU.
Paris Agosto 1930
THESE WERE HAPPY TIMES. THERE IS GARDEL. AND THERE, ALFREDO LE PERA, WHO WAS MY GOOD FRIEND AND COMPANION THEN.
BUT HE NEVER RETURNED.
OF COURSE, THEN HE WENT WITH CARLOS TO THE UNITED STATES. HE WROTE TO ME UNTIL HIS FINAL DAYS. HE WAS COMING TO MEET OUR SON, MARCEL LE PERA, DOMINIQUE'S FATHER.
ALFREDO DIED WITH GARDEL IN MEDELLÍN, IN 1935. I WENT TO CLAIM HIS BODY. MARCEL WAS FIVE YEARS OLD. HE NEVER MET HIM.
PARDON ME, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR?
YES.
DID YOU BRING ANYTHING BACK FROM MEDELLÍN? SOMETHING SMALL, ABOUT THIS BIG?
DOMINIQUE OWES YOU HER LIFE, CANELONES. I THINK THIS WILL BE IN GOOD HANDS.
14

* RETURN WITH A WRINKLED FOREHEAD

* THE SNOWS OF TIME SILVER MY TEMPLE ** TO FEEL THAT LIFE IS A BREEZE
*** THAT TWENTY YEARS IS NOTHING **** HOW FEVERISH THE LOOK

7 The Lone Stone Heritage

A.57
"THE MUTE," "EL MOROCHO," AND "THE SMILING BRONZE."
RIE
WITH THESE THREE FROM PARIS, THERE ARE SEVEN.
HOW MANY ARE STILL MISSING?
I THINK THERE ARE ANOTHER FIVE.
AND WHAT DO WE HOPE TO FIND IN LONDON?

DEPENDS ON THE INFORMATION OUR CONTACT HAS.
THE MAN WHO WILL GIVE US THE CLUE IS DUE TO APPEAR IN THE PLAZA IN FIVE MINUTES. LET'S GO.
THAT GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ COULD FIND ANOTHER WAY TO PASS ON THE INFORMATION...
HE WANTS TO MAKE IT COMPLICATED.
A NOVELIST'S GAME.
The Kelpers are brithish
FALKLAND
A DEMONSTRATION FOR THE FALKLAND ISLANDS!
THE KELPERS LIVE ON THE ISLANDS.
THEY'RE ASKING TO BE RECOGNIZED AS FULL BRITISH CITIZENS, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS. THIS IS GOING TO END BADLY.
2

ANIMALS! ANIMALS!
ANIMALS!
ANIMALS!
THE FALKANDS ARE LARGENTINE
SONS OF BITCHES!!
HE DOESN'T SPEAK ENGLISH.
HE'S GOING TO GET IT FROM BOTH SIDES.
IT'S NOT FAIR.
I'M PERRAMUS, FROM SANTA MARÍA.
I'M RICHARD GÓMEZ, A KELPER. I WANT TO GO THERE.

I'M FIGHTING A PERSONAL WAR AGAINST IMPERIAL BRITAIN.
AND WHY IS THAT? WHAT HAPPENED?
PICADILLY
IT'S A LONG STORY I HAVE TO TELL YOU. BUT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? THIS CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE.
THERE WAS A MESSAGE.
I GOT ONE, TOO.
LOOK OUT!
DID YOU SEE WHO IT WAS?
"POLVITO" CHAMARRA AND THE COLOMBIANS.
THEY'RE THE SAME.
WITH YOUR HELP, I'LL FIND MY FATHER.
AND WITH YOURS, WE'LL FIND OURS.
THERE'S SOMEONE WHO WILL HELP YOU
Picadilly circus.
5 PM.
4

WHO BROUGHT US TOGETHER WITH THOSE MESSAGES?
A COLOMBIAN THAT NEEDS A SUBJECT FOR HIS NEXT NOVEL.
AND WHO WANTS TO KILL US?
OTHER COLOMBIANS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING WE ARE.
CARLOS GARDEL'S TEETH.
THESE ARE SOME.
TEETH! MY FATHER KNEW CARLOS GARDEL.
THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!
HOW DID YOUR FATHER KNOW GARDEL?
HE WORKED WITH HIM ON THE FILM EL DÍA QUE ME QUIERAS, "THE DAY YOU WILL LOVE ME."

MY FATHER WAS A MARINE AND THEY FILMED PART OF IT ON HIS SHIP.
WHO WAS YOUR FATHER?
CAPTAIN RICHARD STONE.
RICHARD "LONE" STONE, THE LONELY NAVIGATOR?
SIR RICHARD?
YES.
THE MEN YOU SUMMONED HAVE BEGUN TO ARRIVE.
KEEP AN EYE ON THEIR IDS, MORRISON. THERE'S ONLY A HALF HOUR BEFORE WE--
6

THE MEETING BEGINS. WE WON'T WAIT FOR ANYONE. THEY MUST BE ON TIME.
YES, SIR.
WE HAVE TO BE ON TIME. MY FATHER'S HOUSE IS IN HOXTON. WE'LL BE LESS CONSPICUOUS IF WE DON'T GO BY TAXI.
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN THERE?
TODAY IS HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY, AND HE'S CONVENING ALL HIS SONS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN "LONE" WHEN HE SAILED BUT HE HAD COMPANY, LIKE A GOOD SAILOR, WHEN IN PORT.
ARE THERE A LOT OF SONS?
I DON'T KNOW. HE CIRCUMNAVIGATED THE WORLD SIX TIMES BETWEEN THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND 1960. MY MOTHER WAS THE LAST PORT.
TICKETS, PLEASE, TICKETS.
I WASN'T ALLOWED IN THE HOUSE THOSE DAYS. THEY WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE ME.
NOW WE'LL RECOGNIZE THEM.
PLEASE, GENTLEMEN, STATE YOUR NAME AND THE DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH.

RICHARD MAC ALLISTAIR, CARDIFF, 1947.
RICHARD DUPONT. MARSEILLES, 1943.
RICHARD PANAIKOS, ATHENS, 1950.
I'LL INTRODUCE MYSELF LIKE THIS: RICHARD GÓMEZ, FROM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO ACCEPT ME. THAT'S WHY I'M GOING DIRECTLY TO MY FATHER.
TICKETS, PLEASE.
LOOK OUT. HE HAS A GUN.
CHAMARRA, AGAIN!
LOOK OUT!

RICHARD ARRUABARRENA, SAN SEBASTIÁN, 1949.
RICHARD SAHIB HASSAN. CAIRO, 1951.
RICHARD KARAO. SAMOA, 1953.
RICHARD RAHMANI. BOMBAY, 1954.
WE HAVE TO BE ON TIME! ENEMY AND CANELONES CAN HANDLE CHAMARRA.
DUNL
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO IN THE MAIN ENTRANCE. THERE ARE GUARDS.
WE'LL TRY TO JUMP THE FENCE AND GO THROUGH THE GARDEN.
P 95
AND WHAT IS YOUR FATHER GOING TO DO? GIVE OUT AN INHERITANCE?
NOT EXACTLY. HE CALLED US HERE TO ACKNOWLEDGE US, BECAUSE WHEN WE LISTEN TO THE WILL, HE WON'T BE THERE.
9

HE'S JUST FOUNDED THE "LONE" STONE FOUNDATION, WHICH WILL ENDOW A MUSEUM WITH ALL THE MEMORIES AND THINGS MY FATHER COLLECTED OVER FIFTY YEARS. BEFORE THAT, HE WANTS TO LEAVE US EACH ONE THING.
AND I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT KIND OF RELIC HE HAS DECIDED TO LEAVE YOU, DEAR RICHARD.
RICHARD LIN, SHANGHAI, 1955.
RICHARD CATONGA, DAKAR, 1956.
RICHARD DA SILVA, RECIFE, 1959.
AND THE LAST OF THOSE PRESENT, IS--
RICHARD QUIÑONES, BARRANQUILLA, 1959.

BARRAN-QUILLA? QUIÑO-NES?
IT'S FILOSO GÓMEZ, AN AGENT OF POLVITO CHAMARRA!
LET'S GO IN!
GENTLEMEN, WHAT KIND OF MANNERS ARE THESE?
WHO ARE YOU?
RICHARD GÓMEZ, MALVINAS ISLANDS, 1960.

WHAT "MALVINAS?" FALKLANDS-- FALKLAND ISLANDS.
MALVINAS--
DETAIN HIM. HE'S AN IMPOSTER!
HE'S THE IMPOSTER! HIS NAME IS FILOSO GÓMEZ, NOT QUIÑONES.
RITA, MY MOTHER, SAYS THAT YOU CAN'T HAVE FORGOTTEN--
--CERTAIN THINGS, LIKE--
DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
12

NOW THAT THIS LITTLE MISTAKE IS RESOLVED, I WANT TO DISTRIBUTE, AMONG MY SONS AND BELOVED GUESTS, A FEW PRESENTS--BY WHICH I HOPE TO MAKE AMENDS FOR MY ABSENCE.
AND I'LL BEGIN WITH THE YOUNGEST. THIS IS YOURS, RICHARD GÓMEZ, MY SON FROM THE FALKLANDS.
MALVINAS--
AS YOU SAY: MALVINAS--
AND HOW DID YOU ACQUIRE THIS GARDELIAN RELIC?
IT'S THE INFERIOR PREMOLAR, AND HAS BEEN GIVEN THE NAME "LA SONRISA," "THE SMILE."
I ACQUIRED IT FOR VERY LITTLE IN 1935 IN MEDELLÍN. FROM A MAN WHO DEALS IN SUCH MEMENTOS. I WENT TO VISIT HIS GRAVE AFTER THE ACCIDENT AND I PURCHASED SOME OTHER THINGS.
WHAT OTHER THINGS?
THESE LETTERS. I WAS GOING TO GIVE THEM TO MY SON FROM BARRANQUILLA, BUT--

WE CHECKED. YOU WERE NEVER IN THAT PORT, SIR.
YES. THAT IMPOSTER. HE SEEMED TO ME--
THEY'RE ADDRESSED TO GARDEL IN DIFFERENT PLACES: BUENOS AIRES, PARIS. WHO SENT THEM?
Peggy Hudson, N.Y. 57th — 841 New York
OLD FRIENDS FROM NEW YORK, FOUR BLONDE SISTERS THAT KNEW CARLITOS: MARY, PEGGY, I DON'T REMEMBER THE OTHER NAMES--
THE BLONDES OF NEW YORK! THE STARS OF THE FOXTROT!
IF YOU ARE SO INTERESTED IN THESE GARDEL MEMENTOS, I'LL GIVE THEM TO YOU, AS WELL.
THANK YOU.
14

WE'LL SEE YOU IN SANTA MARÍA, RICHARD, SO THAT YOU CAN LEND US THAT MISSING PIECE TO COMPLETE THE SINGER'S SMILE. AND SIR RICHARD, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.
AND WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?
TO NEW YORK! SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT THERE'S A CLUE IN THESE LETTERS THAT WILL LEAD US TO WHAT WE'RE MISSING.
WELL, THOSE LATIN AMERICANS--
CLINGING TO THE PAST AND THEIR MYTHS, THEY'LL NEVER OVERCOME THEIR UNDERDEVELOPMENT--DON'T YOU THINK, SON?
SON!
WAIT FOR ME, WAIT FOR ME.
15

8
Blondes
of
New York

IT'S A GREAT STORY, PERRAMUS.
AND THAT WAS IT, GABO. HERE ARE ALL THE PIECES WE RECOVERED IN PARIS AND LONDON.
WOULD YOU LIKE A PIECE? THERE ARE FIVE.
FIVE MORE TEETH--
WHAT DO YOU THINK, ATTORNEY BUCARAMANGA?
PERFECT. WE'RE ONLY MISSING TWO.
AND TODAY, WE'LL HAVE THEM.
VERY GOOD WORK, MY FRIENDS. AND IT'S A FANTASTIC STORY, TO LIVE AND TO TELL. I'M SURE THAT MY NEXT NOVEL WILL BE A SUCCESS.
I DON'T DOUBT IT. AND TONIGHT, WE'LL ACT OUT THE FINAL CHAPTER, PROVIDING THERE'S NO VIOLENT INCIDENTS WITH YOUR COLOMBIAN "FRIENDS."

DON'T BE UPSET, PERRAMUS. SUPPOSE, INSTEAD, THAT "POLVITO" CHAMARRA, "FILOSO" GÓMEZ, AND THE OTHERS ARE JUST COLLABORATING WITH YOU TO ADD A LITTLE ACTION TO THE STORY. A NOVEL LIKE TOOTH FOR TOOTH NEEDS SURPRISE, DANGER.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU SECRETLY SUMMONED US HERE?
YES. THERE ARE RISKS. BUT THEY ARE THE ONES YOU HAVE AWAKENED WITHOUT MUCH FUSS OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS: LAS VEGAS, HAVANA, PARIS, LONDON.
THIS TIME, WE'LL BE DISCRETE. WITH THE INFORMATION WE HAVE FROM "LONE" STONE, WE'VE ALREADY FOUND THE "BLONDES OF NEW YORK" AND HAVE CONTACTED THEM.
I'M HAPPY TO HEAR IT. WHERE ARE THEY?
IN A RETIREMENT HOME FIVE BLOCKS FROM CENTRAL PARK. OVER THERE--

WHAT A PLACE! THE RESIDENTS WANT FOR NOTHING. HEATED POOL, INDOOR TENNIS COURTS, BALLROOMS, MOVIES. EVEN A NUCLEAR BOMB SHELTER.
AND ITS OWN CEMETERY. NO ONE GETS OUT OF HERE ALIVE, ENEMY.
WELC
to Sweet
THEY'RE VERY STRICT. PERRAMUS GOT US THIS VISITOR PASS, BUT IT'S THE ONLY ONE THEY'LL GIVE US. WE HAVE TO FIND THE TEETH TODAY. HE SPOKE WITH PEGGY.
PEGGY, MARY-- THEY MUST EACH HAVE ONE. AND THE OTHER GIRLS?
PEGGY, MARY-- I WONDER WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE?
GENTLEMEN?
MA'AM.
MISS. I'M PEGGY SUN. THIS IS MARY MOON.
"BLONDES OF NEW YORK"
I KNOW WHY YOU'VE COME, MR. CANELONES. MR. PERRAMUS EXPLAINED EVERYTHING, AND IT'S A NOBLE CAUSE. I'M VERY HAPPY TO GIVE YOU MY TOOTH, A SUPERIOR PREMOLAR KNOWN AS "EL FRANCESITO" OR "THE LITTLE FRENCHMAN," BUT--

DID YOU BRING ME WHAT I ASKED FOR?
OF COURSE. HERE'S THE FILM WITH GARDEL.
LOOK, MARY! FINALLY, WE CAN MAKE THOSE IDIOTS IN THE SALON SHUT UP. THEY ONLY KNOW HORROR FILMS AND NEVER BELIEVE US.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MARY?
SHE'S NOT DOING WELL. IT WON'T BE EASY FOR YOU TO GET "THE SOUL THAT SINGS," THE LOWER LEFT INCISOR SHE ALWAYS KEPT. VERY BEAUTIFUL--
"KEPT?" THEN SHE DOESN'T HAVE IT? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S NOT JUST GARDEL'S MEMORY THAT UNITES US. WE'RE COUSINS, AND WE MADE OUR CAREER TOGETHER. WE CAME HERE THREE YEARS AGO. SHE BECAME LIKE THAT AFTER A TRIP TO ASIA WHERE SHE CONTRACTED A KIND OF MALARIA, WITH INTENSE FEVERS AND DELIRIUM THAT LASTED FOR WEEKS.
AND HOW IS SHE DOING NOW?
MUCH BETTER. A JAPANESE DOCTOR HAS BEEN TREATING HER WITH HYPNOSIS AND ACUPUNCTURE, AND THE FEVER DISAPPEARED JUST LAST WEEK. BUT NOT THE SYMPTOMS. FOR NOW, HER MIND REMAINS TOTALLY BLANK, AND SHE ONLY COMMUNICATES WHILE SLEEPING, DELIRIOUSLY.
SHE UNDERSTANDS, BUT HAS SOME MENTAL BLOCK. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MARY?

HER MEMORIES HAVE DISAPPEARED. AND WITH THEM, THE SECRETS SHE KEPT HIDDEN. I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'LL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT WHERE "THE SOUL THAT SINGS" IS.
OH, NO.
THAT'S BE RESOLVED. NOW, BEFORE GOING TO MY ROOM TO GIVE THEM "EL FRANCESITO" I WANT TO SHOW THESE IDIOTS SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.
WE'LL SHOW THOSE SKEPTICS WHO YOU AND I WERE.
PUT THE CREATURE FROM OUTER SPACE BACK ON; TURN OFF THIS GARBAGE.
SPLAT!
5

SHE SEEMS TO BE WAKING.
AY... THOSE EYES... THOSE EYES... AND THOSE TEETH... WHAT TEETH... NO... NO... THEY'RE PIERCING ME... NO.
THOSE EYES... PIERCE ME... LIKE TEETH.
SHE'S DREAMING ABOUT THE MONSTER AGAIN, SINCE WE SAW ***THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*** LAST WEEK.
IT'S NOT THAT. SHE'S DELIRIOUS.
I THINK I KNOW WHAT IT IS.
REMEMBER THE LINE ON PAGE 85 OF ***ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE,*** THE CLUE THAT NO ONE KNEW WHAT IT MEANT? REMEMBER WHAT IT SAID?
6

OF COURSE. WE'VE REPEATED IT SO MANY TIMES. "SHAKING WITH FEVER, FIGHTING AGAINST DELIRIUM, WAITING UNTIL--"
IT'S THE KEY TO FINDING THE LAST TOOTH! IN THE DELIRIUM, IN THE FEVER--SHE'S NOT DESCRIBING A MONSTER--SHE'S TALKING ABOUT TEETH.
ABOUT EYES--AND PIERCING--
THE JAPANESE DOCTOR--THE HYPNOTIST ACUPUNCTURIST!
HE MUST HAVE FOUND THE SECRET, AND THE TOOTH.
WHO IS HE?
I HAVE HIS CARD HERE.
THOSE EYES. WHAT TEETH--
WE SHOULD STOP THE HORROR FILM SERIES.
COMEDIES WITH FRED ASTAIRE, GENE KELLY--
I KNOW THIS MAN, AND NOT AS A DOCTOR.
Carlo Fujisawa
54 Street, 27, 4th 56 N.Y. NEW YORK
PEGGY, THANK YOU FOR "EL FRANCESITO."
MAY THE SMILE OF CARLOS LIGHT YOUR WAY.
LET'S GO LOOK FOR THIS DOCTOR.
I REMEMBER. HE'S A COLLECTOR OF OLD TANGO ALBUMS, THERE ARE A LOT OF THEM IN JAPAN. HE WAS IN SANTA MARÍA AND APPEARED IN THE PAPERS AND ON TV.
COST PLUS
7

MEN LIKE HIM ARE CAPABLE OF ANYTHING.
Charlo Fujisawa
WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH CHARLO FUJISAWA.
LA CATRERA
¡黒木純一郎!
WHERE IS FUJISAWA?
I'M SORRY. MR. FUJISAWA IS IN TOKYO. DO YOU WANT SPEAK WITH HIS SECRETARY?
自己防衛という本来道界が「サ
HE'S NOT HERE. HE WENT TO TOKYO. WE CAN SPEAK WITH HIS SECRETARY.
女は誰でフクルクルいどっち?
WE'RE LOOKING FOR "THE SOUL THAT SINGS." WHERE IS IT?
士事中は

osvaldo pugliese
TO DAY tango
OSVALDO PUGLIESE
AND HIS TIPICAL ORCHESTRA
WITH
WE'RE TO MEET HERE AND CELEBRATE BY LISTENING TO MAESTRO PUGLIESE. THEY WON'T BE LONG.
CANELONES SAID THAT AFTER LEAVING SWEET TOMB THEY RAN INTO SOME PROBLEMS, BUT--
HERE THEY ARE.
GOOD EVENING. EXCUSE OUR LATENESS.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
DR. FUJISAWA'S SECRETARY.
WHO?
AND THE TEETH?
MIRACU-LOUSLY, FINE.
9

NOT YOURS, GARDEL'S.
WE BROUGHT ONE. THE LAST ONE, WE'LL HAVE TO GO TO JAPAN TO FIND.
JAPAN? WE DON'T HAVE THE BUDGET FOR THAT TRIP.
WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER. QUIET, NOW.
THE MAESTRO IS PLAYING.
THERE'S NO BUDGET.
SHHHH
10

A
Japanese
Doctor

* YOU WON'T KNOW, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, WHAT IT IS TO DIE, A THOUSAND TIMES, FROM ANXIETY ** YOU CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND... WHAT IT IS TO LOVE AND BECOME MAD... *** YOUR LIPS THAT BURN... YOUR KISSES THAT INTOXICATE... **** AND THEY DISTURB MY REASON... I KNOW THAT, NEVER AGAIN ... WILL I BE ABLE TO START...

* YOU'RE HELD INSIDE... I CARRY YOU IN MY HEART ** AND BURNING AND PASSIONATE, TREMBLING WITH ANXIETY... I WANT TO DIE IN YOUR ARMS

EXCUSE ME, I'M A DOCTOR. HE'S FAINTED.
LET THEM WORK. LOOSEN HIS TIE.
LET'S SEE. IT'S JUST FROM EMOTIONAL SHOCK.
MAESTRO! WHAT HAPPENED, MAESTRO?
HE'S IMPROVING.
HE'S COMING TO.
IT WAS NOTHING.
THANK YOU, DOCTORS.
AT LEAST WE HAVE THREE MORE NAMES OF IRREFUTABLE DOCTORS AND TANGO FANS.
THIS IS THE PRACTICE OF TAKEO GOYITA. LET'S GO.
HE'S A NUTRI-TION-IST?
YES, BUT NOT FOR WEIGHT LOSS. HE SPECIALIZES IN SUMO WRESTLERS: BUILDING THEM UP INTO FIGHTING SHAPE.
AND THEY DON'T PERMIT SKINNIES.

LET'S HOPE PERRAMUS IS DOING BETTER.
DOCTOR SADAO MASAKO? ON BEHALF OF BORGES--IT'S URGENT.
YOU CAN'T GO IN. IT'S PRIVATE.
AND SO YOU CAN'T, EITHER?
A GYNECOLOGIST-- CAN'T BE HIM. I HOPE BORGES DOES BETTER.
DOCTOR MAKANIYA IS BUSY.
TELL HIM THAT JORGE LUIS BORGES HAS COME TO THANK HIM FOR HIS HELP.
DOCTOR MAKANIYA IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OPERATION.
SURGI-CAL?
NO, COM-MERCIAL.
4

BORGES! COME IN, PLEASE.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, MARÍA.
COME IN, BORGES. MAY I INTRODUCE YOU TO SHEIKH ARRAMACH.
GREETINGS.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, SOMETIMES--
WE NEED A WITNESS, SOMEONE TO CERTIFY OUR TRANSACTION. THE CONTRACT IS IN JAPANESE, AND YOU CAN--
IT'S A SIMPLE DEAL, THE SIMPLEST OF OPERATIONS. I CAME ACROSS A PRECIOUS RELIC THAT IS VERY SOUGHT AFTER, AS I HAVE VERIFIED--
A TOOTH FROM GARDEL. AND WHAT DOES SHEIKH ARRAMACH OFFER?
5

JUST A LITTLE RICE.
HOW MUCH?
WHAT THE CONTRACT SAYS. WHAT THE CHESSBOARD REQUIRES.
JUST TEN GRAINS ON THE FIRST SQUARE, DOUBLE ON THE NEXT, DOUBLE THAT ON THE THIRD, AND DOUBLE THAT ON THE FOURTH, AND SO ON.
AND YOU'RE PREPARED TO SIGN, ARRAMACH?
THE TOOTH.
THE RICE FIRST.

El Motocho del Arabe
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.
A Makaniy de Horacio Tabarn
YOU HAVEN'T STUDIED YOUR LITERATURE, SHEIK.
IT'S AN OLD TALE, AND I FIND IT STRANGE YOU DON'T KNOW IT. THE ARABS INVENTED THE ZERO, AFTER ALL, AND CALCULUS.
NOT ALL THE RICE YOU COULD BUY WITH YOUR OIL WELLS, SHEIK.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY, DOCTOR MAKANIYA.
GIVE ME THE TOOTH. MAKANIYA.
POLVITO. I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED: ARRAMACH IS CHAMARRA BACKWARDS.
HE'S NOT AN ARAB.
YES, LIKE THIS.
7

BANG!
AAAAGG
YOU CAN'T CATCH ME.
8

MARÍA--I DIDN'T KNOW YOU KNEW.
THERE ARE MANY THINGS YOU STILL DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME, MAESTRO.
CAREFUL! DON'T LET HIM--!!
HE SWALLOWED IT.
C'MON.
LET'S GO. LAXATIVE!
FAST LAXATIVE
LOOKS LIKE IT'S ON ITS WAY.
7

RECORD TIME!!
DON'T BE DISCOURAGED, MAKANIYA. THINGS BELONG TO THOSE WHO DESIRE THEM MOST, THOSE WHO MOST LOVE OR NEED THEM.
WHAT'S THIS? WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
IT'S VERY SIMPLE: THE ADVENTURE IS OVER. LET'S GO HOME.
PERRAMUS?
YES?
I LIKE HOW YOU SING "PASIONAL."
10

Epilogue

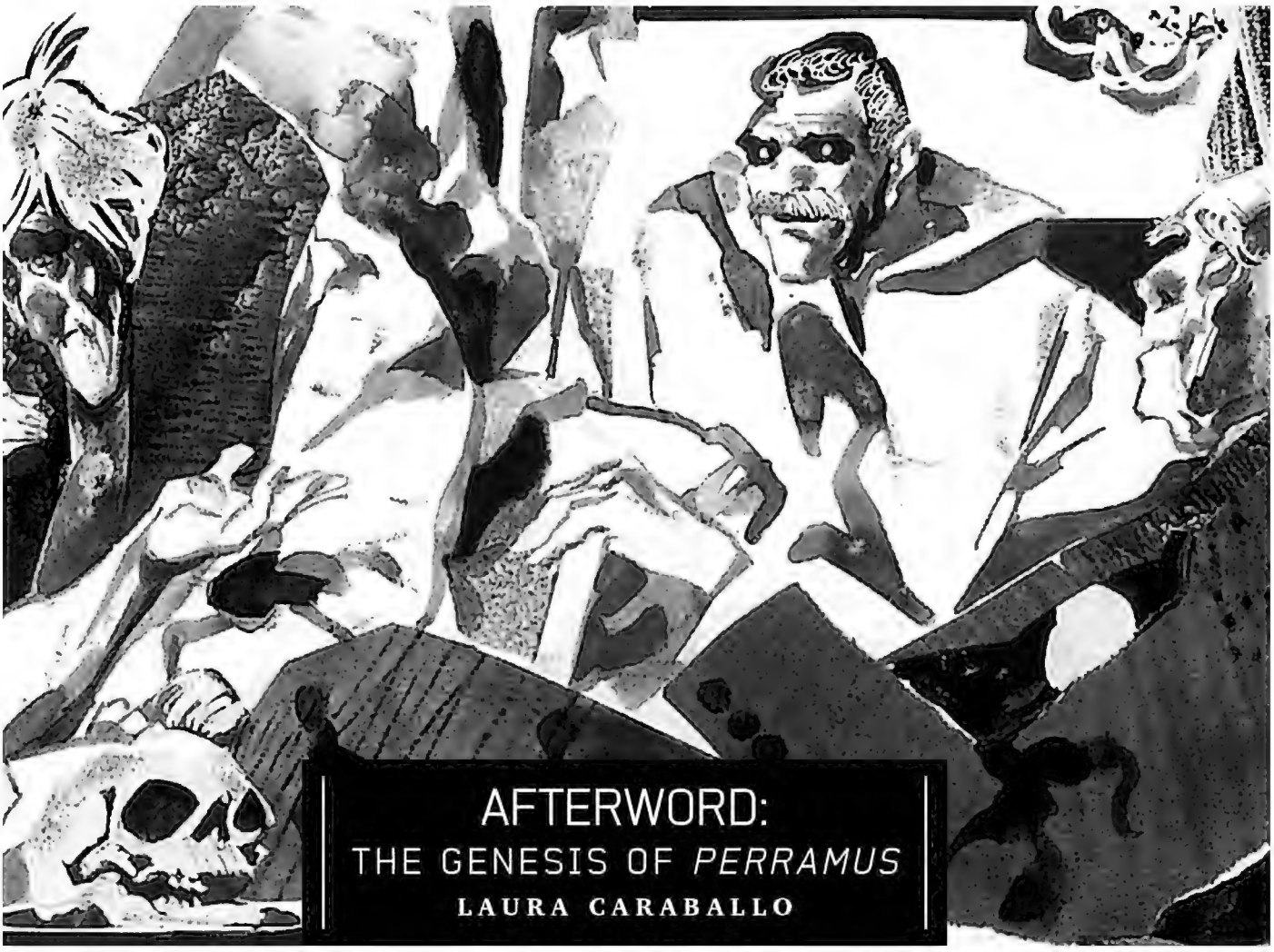
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BEFORE THE PRESS ARRIVES I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU. FROM THE BEGINNING--
EACH ONE OF YOU HAS DONE EVERYTHING YOU COULD TO RESTORE THE LEGENDARY SMILE OF GARDEL. I NOW INVITE YOU, TOGETHER, TO RECONSTRUCT IT.
FIRST, THE LADIES: DOMINIQUE LE PERA, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, WHO CAME ALL THE WAY FROM PARIS. MARÍA KODAMA--
WHO REVEALED UNKNOWN ABILITIES IN THE LAST EPISODE.

THE MAESTRO OSVALDO PUGLIESE, WHO PROVIDED IMMENSE HELP TO OUR AGENTS IN THE LAST ADVENTURE. AND BUCARAMANGA, WHO HAS BEEN MY RIGHT HAND IN ORGANIZING THIS ADVENTUROUS ODYSSEY.
THE FIFTH TOOTH WILL BE PLACED BY THE YOUNGEST, RICHARD GÓMEZ, THE KELPER.
WHO FOUND, AT LAST, IN SANTA MARÍA A REASON TO BE, A DEFINITIVE HOME.
AND THERE IS SOMEONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN ALL OF THE ADVENTURES, WHO IS "THE MOST."
THE MOST ENDOWED, IF ONLY BY A FEW CENTIMETERS, IN LAS VEGAS, AND BEFORE THE TERRIFYING KNIFE OF SINATRA: THE ENEMY!
AND ANOTHER, PRESENT EVERY TIME, IN BUENOS AIRES, IN CUBA, AND, ABOVE ALL--
--IN PARIS, WHERE HE WAS EXTRAORDINARY: CANELONES!
2

AND THE FINAL TEETH I WANT TO PLACE MYSELF, ALONG WITH THOSE WHO IN SOME WAY EMBODY THE ULTIMATE SPIRIT OF THIS GROUP.
THIS IS MY TURN.
BUT THE NEXT IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME INSEPARABLE FROM THE VERY HOUR OF CONCEIVING THIS ADVENTURE.
IT'S DONE.
MISSION ACCOM-PLISHED!!
3

PERRAMUS--
YES.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS. TO SEE IF THINGS CHANGE, TO SEE IF THINGS REMAIN AS BEFORE.
AS BEFORE AS IN WHEN?
THIS WAS A SYMBOLIC TASK, WE WERE TOLD. TO RECOVER THE FULLNESS LOST THESE FIFTY YEARS--
--SYMBOLIZED BY THE SINGER'S SMILE. NOW, I WISH TO SEE IT.

AND DO YOU SEE ANYTHING?
DID I SAY SOMETHING STUPID? ARE YOU FUCKING WITH ME?
PERHAPS. THE ONLY THING THAT EXISTS IS THE JOURNEY. ONE NEVER ARRIVES ANYWHERE. IT NEVER ENDS, PERRAMUS. THERE'S A POEM BY CAVAFY, CALLED "ITHAKA." DO YOU KNOW IT?
I DON'T THINK SO.
WELL, WHAT CAN ITHACA GIVE TO ONE WHO, LIKE ULYSSES, HAS SOUGHT IT FOR SO LONG? IT GAVE HIM THE JOURNEY, THE LIFE SPENT REACHING FOR HER. THAT'S WHERE YOU FIND THE MEANING, NOT IN THE END.
BUT IN THE ADVENTURE, TOO.
GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ HAS ALREADY RECORDED IT. TOOTH BY TOOTH-- DO YOU LIKE IT?
IT'S GOOD. AND NOW? WHERE DO WE GO?
fin
5



AFTERWORD:
THE GENESIS OF *PERRAMUS*

LAURA CARABALLO

Perramus is the result of a "misunderstanding." So says its writer, Juan Sasturain, author and comics critic. At the beginning of the '80s, the great comic artist Alberto Breccia asked him to write a script for a graphic novel that could be sold to the European market (especially in Italy, France, and Spain), where several of his stories had already been published. Sasturain started with an eight-page draft that evolved into a 467-page saga. It was 1982, the final moments of the bloodiest civil-military dictatorship in Argentina's history, and that context greatly influenced his writing. The first page depicts a frequent practice of the dictatorship's infamous death squadrons, a nightmare that lives in the memories of most people, or in the imagination of those who didn't live through that period: the terrifying nighttime kidnappings that remain in the Argentine collective consciousness. Perramus, the hero, manages to escape from one of these operations, leaving his companions behind, an action that leads him to choose to forget: to delete his memory. Here, the adventures start.

If Breccia was looking for an adventure, dynamic and attractive for the European readers, Sasturain proposed a story anchored in the context of that time. Together, they created a masterpiece that will remain forever in the annals of worldwide comics. It's a compendium of references to Latin American dictatorships and to Argentina's culture, with its symbols, its characters, its artists, and its miseries. The presence of the consecrated writer Jorge Luis Borges as an active character in the unfolding of the story demonstrates how fiction can open itself to reality.

Beginning in 1982, Perramus's saga consists of four graphic novels, which both creators worked on for more than eight years. It was published in different countries and languages from the first episodes and in 1989, it won the Human Rights Prize of the Francophone chapter of Amnesty International for its French edition (published by Glénat).

The last three parts, written after the return to democracy, embark upon other intricate paths of oblivion, search, and investigation; whereas the first part, created toward the end of the dictatorship, has a clear, dismal tone that reflects the darkness of those years.

The Political Context: State Terrorism in Argentina

The civil-military dictatorship meant seven years of censorship and repression. The putsch took place in 1976, on the 24th of March, which is commemorated today by people marching in streets, chanting "Nunca mas" (Never again).

Juan Domingo Perón, the central personality in Argentina's political history since the 1940s, died in 1974. The fractures between his followers, the "Peronistas," and parts of the armed forces who disapproved of his successor—none other than his widow, María Estela Martínez—led to a takeover by the military, which was commanded by the general Jorge Rafael Videla.

This event wasn't only local, but international. Operation Cóndor was a strategic, clandestine organization of global outreach, which lasted from 1970 to 1980 and covered six countries ruled by dictatorships: Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Paraguay. Their governments aimed to systematically exterminate Communism in South America, and more precisely any element they judged subversive. Their actions were coordinated by the United States of America and their Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Implementing the techniques of the "guerre moderne" as perfected by France in Indochina and Algeria, such actions included torture, questioning, surveillance, and forced "disappearance" of whomever was supposedly associated with guerrilla movements.

The execution model of the dictatorship didn't include shooting. Piling up corpses in mass graves might have led to a potential international trial against the military regime for crimes against humanity. Therefore, the military junta chose the disappearances. This practice consisted of kidnapping people and taking them to clandestine centers where they were tortured before being executed. Via death flights (*vuelos de la muerte*), in which the junta dropped victims from aircraft to their demise, many bodies ended up at the bottom of La Plata River. It is estimated that 30,000 people disappeared during this period.

The Falklands War, which took place in Islas Malvinas, precipitated the dictatorship's decline. In 1982, the Argentine army, to legitimize itself in the face of a weakening of its power, invaded and claimed sovereignty over the Falklands, thus unleashing a war with the United Kingdom. Margaret Thatcher's England deployed her powerful navy, which was victorious after only a few months. As a result, a crisis struck the military junta, and Reynaldo Bignone, the last leader of the regime, was obliged to surrender power and call for elections.

On the 30th of October 1983, democracy was restored in Argentina. Raúl Alfonsín was elected president, and tribunals started sentencing the major leaders of those seven dark years that the people had gone through to life imprisonment. But for the population, the feeling of terror remained latent for years; social bonds were disarticulated and could only be reconstructed slowly, after the return of democracy. The trials against the military junta started early, but were soon interrupted by the impunity and clemency laws adopted during the '80s and '90s. Full justice had to wait until 2003, under the presidency of Néstor Kirchner.

The Synergy Between Comic Artist and Writer

It is very difficult to imagine the art of Breccia in *Perramus* without Sasturain's text and vice versa; it is a strongly intricate collaborative work in which we don't know where one's work finishes and where the other starts. It is as if Breccia drew Sasturain and Sasturain wrote Breccia, creating a genuine synergy out of which only a masterpiece could emerge.

When Sasturain was approached by Breccia, it was for his first comics script—though he had a good knowledge of the comic language from the point of view of the critic, and he was already an established storyteller who merely needed to learn a new savoir faire. Being a passionate comics reader, Sasturain imagined the script less from the point of view of the text than that of the image. The first thing that he conceived was a series of pages, which he filled with a sequence of speech bubbles and some annotations that were like a rough draft of the story.

In their process of creation, the script passed through various phases. An exchange with Breccia over this preliminary draft enabled him to prepare a manuscript in shorthand. The artist would allow himself to interfere on the scripts: not directly on the text, but on the sequence. For him, this was part of the comic artist's work, since he also had experience writing his own scripts (some of the short stories in *The Mythos of Cthulhu*, amongst oth-

ers). For instance, he would restructure the page and the sequence—he would expand it if it was difficult for him to organize the content in the allotted space. Sasturain had so much to say! Breccia also took creative liberties; for example, he gave some characters the faces of well-known people in the country's reality: Chancellor Caputto (Argentine diplomat), José Maria Muñoz (a soccer announcer), la barra brava (soccer hooligans), Osvaldo Pugliese (tango composer), Carlos Gardel (legendary tango singer) or even some universally known figures, such as Frank Sinatra or Fidel Castro. He used locations such as Paris, New York, Cuba, and Japan, and even included the slogan "Viva Perón" (Long live Perón) in a protest scene.

Breccia's Art

Breccia is an artist who always sought to surpass himself, to experiment, and to radically change styles. Once he had reached a particular level of knowledge and recognition, he didn't come to a halt, but continued experimenting and playing with the material. Being an autodidact, he had learned "classic" drawing to then "unlearn" it, freeing himself from any publisher's house style.

From his start in the 1940s, when he learned the art of drawing, his work progressed to a more and more experimental and informal cartooning, especially when, thirty years later, he started to adapt literary works. He then moved away from fiction and imagination, establishing a rupture in the art of comics with new processes for the construction of images and sequences. His work is subject to a transition toward "plastic." This image plasticity is based on manipulating the material that forms it. His interest in the material leaves a significant mark in his work; he didn't hide the materials and techniques he worked with but made them stand out: ink, acrylic, graphite, collage, scraping, staining, dripping, etc.

In *Perramus*, as in many of his other works, there is a great plastic dexterity which doesn't aim for clarity and ease of communication but enhances expressivity. Breccia plays both at the macro and the micro levels: big textures, big stains, and little details that coexist in each panel. He had already employed these techniques in previous works such as *The Mythos of Cthulhu* or *A Guy Named Daneri*: the detailed work with normal or diluted ink, the incorporation of textures made with different tools, collage, the incorporation of photos in different sections—even the use of torn paper. Moreover, the strong presence of white is significant and essential in his image: in several cases, he works the black as a background and the white as a form.

In the relationship between form and background, there is a certain interchangeableness: the reader cannot know where the background ends and where the figure starts. Both are united in an indistinguishable mass, for the art of Breccia is focused on figures and bodies. An echo connects the bodies of both the character and the reader to the same rhythm, since the character's body is integrated in the image's internal space and movement, which prevents it from being isolated from its visual and multiple contingency. It is difficult to read it conventionally, as one gets carried away by the textures and the forms that put together the characters and their context.

Breccia had a particular fascination with facial expressions. He was not interested in drawing them nicely but rather making them expressive, ugly, and utterly individualized—like many of the people that he had seen during his adolescence when he worked in the slaughterhouse of Buenos Aires. However, Perramus, the main character, is a hieratic figure, the least expressive of all. Perhaps because he has no identity? Instead, wealth of expressivity, deformation, and body language is brought by the whole range of secondary characters that overflow in each panel.

Fiction and Reality

In his comics, Breccia is known for making "autobio references" to his life, to his childhood neighborhood, to the political situation in his country, and *Perramus* isn't an exception. Sasturain also walks along the same path—looking into the nooks of culture, history, social imaginaries, and of his own cultural references—to structure the storyline.

All these inclusions of what we call "reality" make us penetrate in some way into the story, but also bring us out of it. The density of Breccia's plastic work throws us out of the narrative thread to move into this game of textures and marbled figures, sometimes disturbing the lecture or making it more difficult but giving more of a vision, a sensorial approach.

This story is also a tribute to the tales of adventure, to the serial literature that Breccia and Sasturain used to read in their childhood and that strongly marked Argentina's comics in the '50s, a period of talented comic artists and that of the great scriptwriter Héctor Germán Oesterheld. For this matter, the hero, named Perramus after the brand of his trench coat, gets engaged in one adventure after the other, accompanied by other characters that combine to create a collective hero. Even though the scenarios seem real, this story isn't the representation of an existing reality, but the permanent and contrived evocation of events and people that inhabit or inhabited it. The leaders of the military junta were called "los mariscales." The city of Buenos Aires becomes Santa María in reference to its first foundation in 1536, Santa María del Buen Aire.

Through Sasturain's hand, a central character appears: Jorge Luis Borges, who is different from the real one in the sense that some decisions he makes entail some unexpected consequences. Abstract universes and symbols from his literature are also evoked. Anecdotally, there is an event that does compensate for a failing of history: Borges wins the Nobel Prize in Literature, an event that didn't occur in reality. Amongst the countless other references to literature, the consecrated Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez sends people to look for Carlos Gardel's teeth. This last adventure will be the material for his next novel, that happens to have the same name as the last chapter of the saga: "Tooth for Tooth." This title is a play on words that can be read literally: *un diente a la vez* (a tooth at a time) or in its figurative sense from the law of retaliation, *ojo por ojo, diente por diente* (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth).

Perramus is a work that, in a certain way, mends the unfortunate Argentine and Latin American reality through fiction. Even though the hero's betrayal of his companions makes him want to forget everything, even his own name, he manages to find the keys to start to heal—or at least to move on. The absence of his identity is a permanent reminder of the dehumanization of State terrorism and of institutionalized kidnappings ("los desaparecidos"), a highly symbolic and painful image for the Argentine society. But there is an inversion here: Perramus turns out to be a body without identity, whereas the forced disappearances leave behind themselves a trail of identities without bodies.

Written by two porteños (as the inhabitants of Buenos Aires are called), this story leads readers to search in the urban fabric of the city of Santa María for keys that can save it from its misery. Later, the recovery and the reconstruction of Carlos Gardel's mythical smile is the restitution of a forgotten happiness. But above all, this is a tribute to Argentine activists who had suffered relatives' disappearances and worked tirelessly to recover the bodies of missing persons. Led by a forensic anthropology team, the organizations H.I.J.O.S. (Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio) and the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo undertook this mission. (During the dictatorship, when the latter protested, they were called "madwomen," and their leaders met the same fate.)

To conclude, this permanent crossover between fiction and reality leads us to one and only fact: the adventure never ends. As the painful quest to heal the wounds goes on, it somehow shows more and more promises: there is hope.

Dr. Laura Caraballo is a comics scholar, gallery curator, and teacher. Her book *Alberto Breccia, le maître argentin insoumis* (The Rebellious Argentine Master) has recently been released.

BIOGRAPHY: ALBERTO BRECCIA

EZEQUIEL GARCÍA

Alberto Breccia was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1919. When he was three, he moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina. At a young age, he worked in a slaughterhouse. But he was soon part of Argentina's "golden age" of comics, which began in the '40s, and for which he drew dozens of pages per week—mostly in the action, adventure, humor, or film adaptation genres. In addition, he did commercial artwork for advertising and children's books. In 1946, he began to draw his first recognizable character, Vito Nervio, (written by Leonardo Wadel). There were glimmers of it beforehand, but with this character, Breccia's personal style came to the surface. In 1958, he collaborated for the first time with scriptwriter Héctor Germán Oesterheld (HGO), on *Sherlock Time*, and his graphic art cohered and darkened. He delivered lots of Westerns and war comics to Europe, but the turning point in his career arrived in 1962, when he collaborated with HGO on *Mort Cinder*, a masterpiece of narrative, drawing, and graphic experimentation, published serially in the Argentine magazine *Misterix* until 1964.

In debt, with three children and a sick wife, Breccia abandoned comics for several years and dedicated himself to teaching at the Panamerican School of Art and IDA-Institute of Art Directors. During that time, he only completed the three-page comic *Richard Long* (which Oesterheld also wrote), continuing his graphic experiments by means of collage. One of the first times Breccia was recognized as an *auteur* came shortly afterward in an essay by Argentine intellectual Oscar Masotta, co-director of the World Comics Biennial. (The Biennial was held in 1968 at the Di Tella Institute, the heart of Buenos Aires's pop art scene at that time).

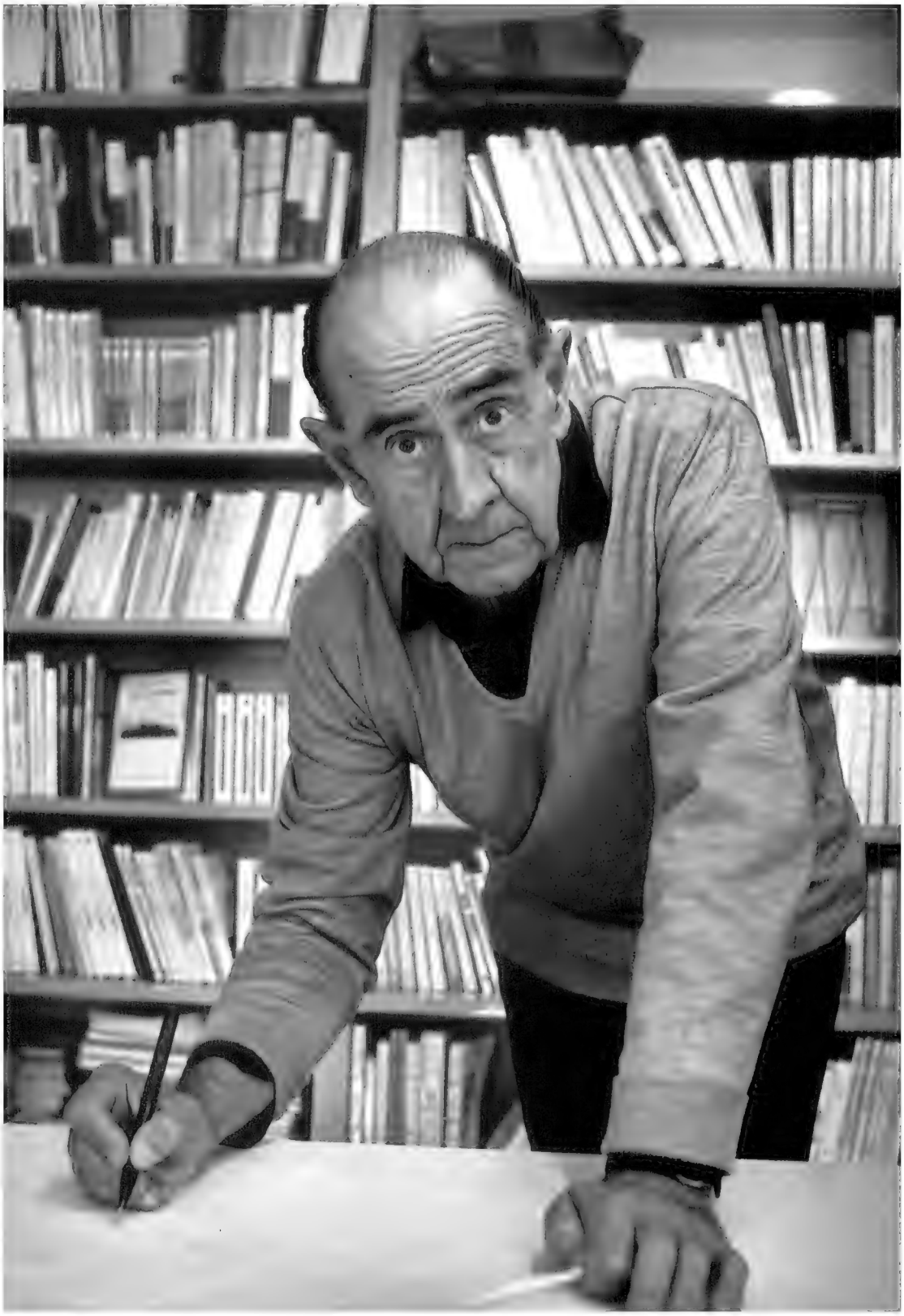
The year 1968 also marked Breccia's return to comics, once again via stories written by Oesterheld. Together, they completed the surprisingly contemporary *La Vida de Che* (it also had sequences drawn by his son, Enrique Breccia) and a retelling of Oesterheld's seminal *The Eternaut*, published weekly in—oddly—a gossip magazine. Times were not the same as when Oesterheld wrote the original version (in 1957, drawn by Francisco Solano López). As dictatorships became more frequent and bloody all over the world, events led HGO to change a central detail in the script: in this new version, the great world powers hand Latin America over to the invaders . . . and Breccia's graphic innovations became even more psychedelic. Readers considered it "inexplicable" and "confusing," so Oesterheld himself shortened the script to quickly complete its publication. The following year, they collaborated on *The Life and Work of Eva Perón: A Graphic History*. Both this and *Che* were controversial because of political figures they depicted and—due to persecution by successive Argentine dictatorships—their original pages and hard copies of the graphic novels disappeared. They were confiscated or lost.

The beginning of the '70s meant recognition in Europe for Breccia: much of his work was republished in books and magazines, and he was invited to and given awards at comics festivals and conventions. From that moment on, he stopped making commissioned comics to become "a professional who dedicates the required time" to comics and started to "feel the joy of drawing in another way," according to *Breccia, El Viejo: Conversations with Juan Sasturain*.

He worked with writers such as Carlos Trillo, Guillermo Saccomanno, Juan Sasturain, and Norberto Buscaglia on original scripts; he also adapted tales by Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, W W. Jacobs, the Brothers Grimm, Lord Dunsany, and the Latin Americans Horacio Quiroga, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Juan Rulfo, Juan Carlos Onetti, Alejo Carpentier, and João Guimarães Rosa.

With his expertise, Breccia was able to take advantage of the short story comics form and innovate, narrate, and experiment without repeating himself. Breccia also drew long-running series like *Nadie* [Nobody] (1997), *El Viajero de Gris* [The Gray Traveler] (1978), *Buscavidas* [Seeking Lives] (1981), *Drácula, Dacul, Vlad?, Bah...* (1984), and *El Dorado: el delirio de Lope de Aguirre* [El Dorado: Lope de Aguirre's Delirium] (1992). The four-volume series *Perramus*, which Sasturain wrote, was recognized in 1989 by Amnesty International. *Report on the Blind*, an excerpt adapted from Ernesto Sábato's classic novel, *On Heroes and Tombs*, was published during Breccia's final year. He had resumed teaching dozens of students who valued new and personal aesthetics. Cancer metastasized and carried Breccia away on November 10, 1993, just when, in Argentina, Cartoonist Day is commemorated.

Ezequiel Garcìa is an Argentine artist born in 1975. After studying under Alberto Breccia, Garcìa co-edited several comics anthologies and has had short works appear in comics magazines in Europe and South America. In 2000, he was given the comics award at the Salão del Humor de Piracicaba in Brazil. Garcìaís first graphic novel, *Turning 30*, was released in Argentina in 2007. More recently, Garcìa has served as a comics teacher, art gallery curator, and co-organizer of the Festival Increìble de Historietas, Fanzines y Afines. Fantagraphics published his graphic novel, *Growing Up in Public*, in the U.S. in 2016. Further updates can be found at www.ezequielgarcia.com.ar.



BIOGRAPHY: JUAN SASTURAIN

Juan Sasturain (Gonzáles Chaves, BA, b. Argentina, 1945) is a writer living and working in Buenos Aires. A graduate of the Department of Literature at the University of Buenos Aires, he was a teacher until the dictatorship (March 1976). He's been working in graphic art and publishing for fifty years.

Since the mid-1980s, he has published more than a dozen works of fiction, including *Los sentidos del agua* [The Meanings of Water], *La lucha continua* [The Struggle Goes On], *Dudoso Noriega* [Suspicious Noriega], an anthology of stories titled *Zenitram*, *La mujer ducha* [The Woman Showers], *Picado grueso* [Picado Grueso], *El caso Yotivenko* [The Yotivenko Case], and *Pretextos* [Pretexts]. He's the author of three detective novels featuring the veteran detective Etchenike: *Manual de perdedores* [A Loser's Manual], *Arena en los zapatos* [Sand in Your Shoes], and *Pagaría por no verte* [I'd Pay Not to See You]; three works for young adult readers: *Parecido S.A.* [Similarity, Inc.], *Los dedos de Walt Disney* [Walt Disney's Fingers], and *Brooklyn & Medio* [Brooklyn & A Half]; and a series of stories, *Los galochas* [Galochas], which Liniers illustrated. In 2017, he published his collected stories, and in 2018, the massive novel *La ultima Hammet* [The Last Hammett], winner of the Premio Hammet awarded annually by the Semana Negra de Gijón literary festival for the best detective novel written in Spanish.

His collected poetry has been published in *Carta al Sargento Kirk y otros poemas de occasion* [Letter to Sgt. Kirk and Other Occasional Poems] and, more recently, in *El versero (cien poemas 1976–2016)* [The Versery (one hundred poems 1976–2016)].

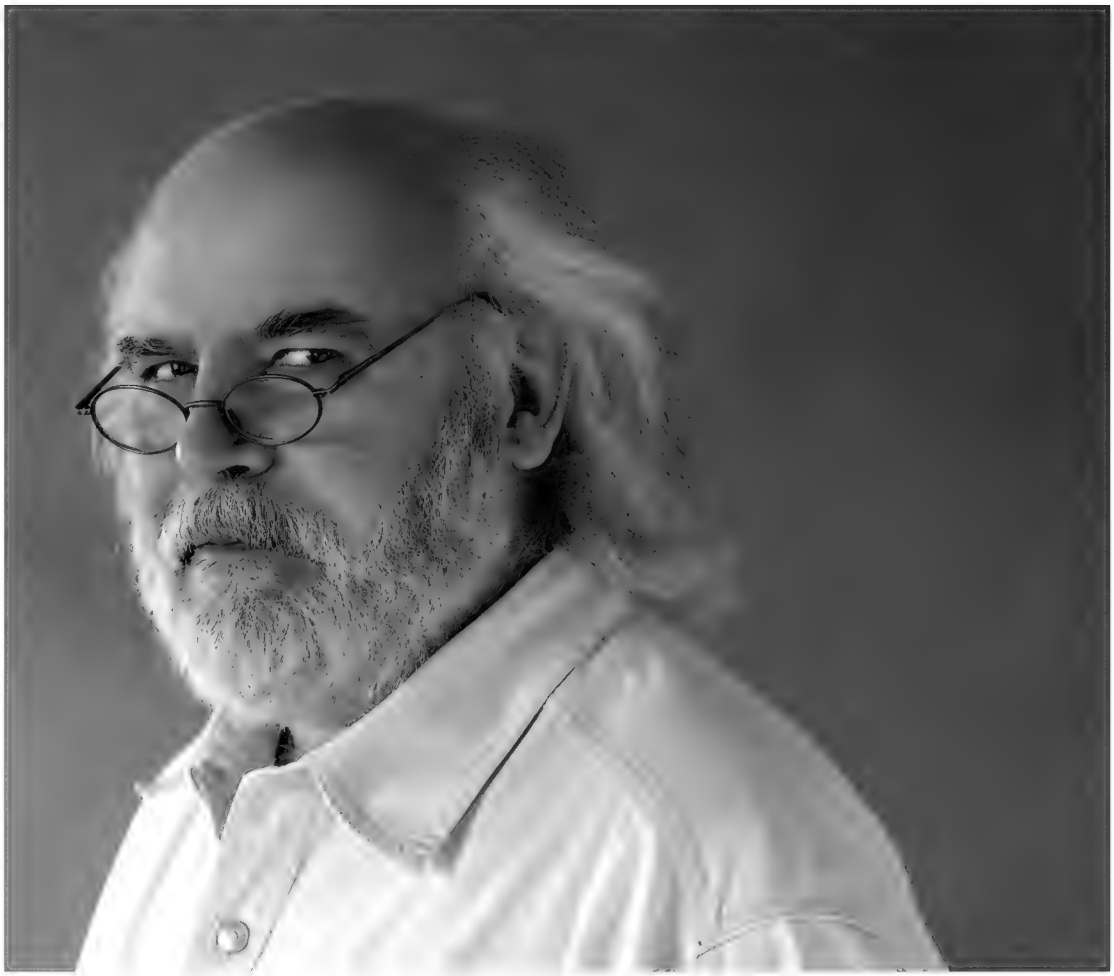
As a scriptwriter, he is the author of *Perramus*—a saga in four parts—with comics artist Alberto Breccia, which won the Amnesty International Prize for the French language in 1989; and of *Zenitram*, with Juan Carlos Quattordio. He's written extensively on comics and graphic literature: *El domicilio de la aventura* [The Home of Adventure], *Buscados vivos* [Wanted Alive], *El Aventurador: una lectura de Oesterheld* [The Adventurer: A reading of Oesterheld] and *Breccia, el Viejo* and [Old Man Breccia]; and about soccer: *El día del arquero* [The Goalie's Day], *Wing de metegol* [Wing of Metegol], and *La patria transpirada* [The Sweat-Stained Fatherland].

Sasturain was a newspaper columnist for *Página / 12* and publisher of the comic journal *Fierro* in its two incarnations. He is currently the editor of a line of noir crime novels, Negro Absoluto, set in Buenos Aires.

Additionally, he co-wrote and directed the television series *Ver para leer* on Telefé, which won the Martín Fierro prize in 2007 and 2008; created and hosted the award-winning Argentine history series *Continuará* for the Encuentro channel; and, for two seasons, hosted *Disparos en la biblioteca* [Shots in the Library], about Argentine noir literature, broadcast on public television and other channels. His last series was the program *¡Plop! Caete de risa* [Plop! Dead of laughter], with Eduardo Maicas, about Argentine graphic literature. It won the Nuevas Miradas prize in 2017.

His novels, stories, and comics have been published in a dozen countries, and several have been adapted for film and television. His narrative production has been awarded honors by the Konex Foundation, the Semana Negra de Gijón, and others.

Photo by ALEJANDRO LIPSZYC



DISEÑO
2ª Semana

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

ERICA MENA

Translators of literary works—poetry, fiction, literary nonfiction, and graphic literature—make countless decisions. Making decisions is, arguably, the translator's core job. These range from clearly recognizable decisions about semantic meaning, such as which word to use for *mar*, "sea" or "ocean," to more complex decisions that are harder to identify, like which aspects of a text's cadence and sonic elements are necessary to creating its style and register, and how to either reproduce them or create new analogs in the target language. Those complex decisions often have to do with a work's poetics, its rhetorical elements—with what makes it *literary*.

Literary translators, especially translators of work with narrative elements, like fiction and graphic literature, also make decisions about content. From whether and how to translate proper names to the tense of the narrative, every element of the original work is up for consideration; every element will be changed by the process of translation. I believe it is a translator's responsibility to be as aware of the process of making these decisions and changes as possible, to resist the simplistic notion of "fidelity" (fidelity to what? To the meaning, the sound, the impact, the intent . . .) and engage with the nuances of translation outside a reductive right/wrong binary.

In *Perramus*, the character Canelones, a Uruguayan of African descent, is sometimes referred to as "el Negro" (the Black) or, even worse, "el Negrito" (the Black Boy). Clearly, in English, this is an inappropriate way of talking about a person of African descent. Though in many Spanish-speaking countries it's common to refer to someone by one of their physical characteristics ("el Gordo" or "the Fat Man," "la Rubia" or "the Blonde Woman," etc.), and often completely innocuous and inoffensive, this usage of language doesn't have the same effect in English. It doesn't add anything to Canelones's character, and even if it did, that appellation has a disproportionately harmful impact in English by using objectifying and racist language. The harm caused by preserving that language far outweighs any potential narrative element, and makes the decision to delete it from the translated text very straightforward. Reproducing the content without considering the changed context would in this case actually harm the text.

Perramus is an extremely complex work of literary genius. It is dark, and grotesque, and painful in important ways, ways that mirror and reflect a society of extreme violence and political terror. It is visually stunning and linguistically sophisticated, emotionally intense, and historically important. Making decisions about a work so embedded in its cultural context, and so reliant on its rich world of allusions and references, was an extraordinarily difficult task. I hope I've conveyed the importance of the work and its intentional darkness without creating further harm in ways that detract from the lasting significance of the book.

61 As he explains, Washington Sosa's nickname, Canelones, is a reference to a Uruguayan city. Canelones is also a Spanish dish, a vasiform pasta that a cook can fill with various ingredients, such as meat. Sosa himself is a Uruguayan meatpacker, which is probably a nod to both Breccia's birth country and his first job, which was in a slaughterhouse.

161 (panel 2) The conflicts between the British and Spanish colonialists in Argentina were not just about global power or control over the land. Class tensions arose from who was descended from whom and where they were born. People who were of Spanish descent and born in Argentina were considered to be lower class than people who were born in Spain.

CULTURAL NOTES

161 (panel 4) Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793–1877) was a dictator who controlled Buenos Aires Province, as well as the Argentine Confederation for a shorter period.

161 (panel 4) During the early 1800s, the British tried numerous times to invade and conquer the Spanish-controlled and colonized Río de la Plata (or the River Plate) to no avail.

161 (panel 5) This refers to the Battle of Vuelta de Obligado, which Rosas's Argentine Confederation and the Anglo-French fought in 1845. Both sides established free navigation of the Río de la Plata basin. Although the Anglo-French ultimately won, the battle garnered greater overall support for Rosas's regime.

190 Mosca translates to "fly" in Spanish. The character's name refers to both his ability to fly as a human cannonball, as well as to the pest-like nature of the insect and the character.

264 In the mid-1800s, Spain, Peru, and Chile, at a time when the latter two were colonized by the former, went to war over Spain's conquest of the Chincha Islands. The Chincha Islands were a highly coveted, nutrient-rich land due to the abundance of guano (or fertilizer made from bird feces).

317 The Medellín tragedy refers to the death of the famous tango singer Carlos Gardel, who passed away in a plane crash in the city on June 24th, 1935.

311 "Por Una Cabeza" translates to "by a head," which is a reference to a horse race being won by the length of a head. It is also the name of a Carlos Gardel composition, as well as a play on words regarding Perramus and his friends' mission to search for Gardel's skull and teeth.

324 "Polvito" translates to "little dust," and "Chamarra" translates to "jacket." Perramus is a brand of jacket in Argentina, making this name a pun on both the main character and protective dust jackets.

349 General Fragote's name is a direct reference to the word "Fragote," which means "conspiracy and military assault."

397 "Contra" is short for "contrarrevolución," which translates to "counterrevolution." The term refers to a group of rebels who opposed the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Their actions, which included terrorism and major human rights violations, were largely supported by the U.S. Henry Kissinger, an American geopolitical policymaker as both a Secretary of State and consultant, favored the group, and gave the go-ahead to the military dictatorship that overthrew Argentina. Mr. Whitesnow is modeled after him.

404 This is the title and opening lyrics of a famous Gardel tango, "Mi Buenos Aires Querido," which translates to, "My beloved Buenos Aires, when I return to see you."

405 An Arthur Rimbaud poem shares its name with this wine bottle label (which translates to "The Drunken Boat"). This poem, itself a response to a Baudelaire poem, describes the rocky course of a boat as it drifts off to sea after all its passengers have been massacred.

CULTURAL NOTES

425 "El Día Que Me Quieras," which translates to "The Day You Will Love Me," is the title of a Carlos Gardel song as well as a movie he starred in. The movie follows a man who elopes with a woman who is considered to be below his social standing, and his rise to fame as a tango singer after his wife's death.

437 This is an allusion to a Gardel song entitled "Las Rubias de Nueva York," which translates to "The Blondes of New York." The opening lyrics of the song begin, "Mary, Peggy, Betty, Julie rubias de New York."

451 These are lyrics from the tango "Pasional," which was written in 1951. The opening lyrics translate to: "You won't know, you'll never know, what it is to die, a thousand times, from anxiety . . ."

Gardel's teeth are named for his life events and for his music. Some of them are nicknames for the singer, and others are named for his songs.

El Zorzal/"The Song Thrush" — This is the name of the skull itself, not any teeth. It is also another title Gardel is known by.
El Mudo/"The Mute" — This is an ironic name for Gardel.
El Morocho/"The Brunette Boy" — This references a nickname of Gardel's (El Morocho del Abasto or "The Brunette Boy from Abasto"). Abasto is a neighborhood in Buenos Aires, where Gardel resided from 1927–1933.
"The Smiling Bronze" — This is another title for Gardel. Julio Jorge Nelson, a fellow Argentine tango musician who greatly aided in establishing Gardel's cult following once he had passed, referred to Gardel as such.
La Sonrisa/"The Smile" — This refers to the motif of Gardel's smile, and it also references the title of one of his songs ("Sonrisas").
El Francesito/"The Little Frenchman" — When he was young, Gardel was known to his friends as "el francesito" as a nod to his French origins.

Perramus: The City and Oblivion is the second volume in Fantagraphics's Alberto Breccia Library, a series of standalone books showcasing the influential artist's major works. The next volume is Héctor Germán Oesterheld's 1969 reimagining of his seminal work *The Eternaut*, which Breccia drew with psychedelic verve. Future volumes include their collaboration on a Che Guevara graphic biography, an anthology of Lovecraft adaptations, and much more.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Created under Argentina's brutal military dictatorship, *Perramus* is an act of resistance in and of itself.

When a political dissident forsakes his memories and his identity, he's called "Perramus" after the label in his raincoat. During his darkly absurdist travels, he teams up with gruff Canelones, a foreign aviator dubbed The Enemy, and a fictionalized Borges, who comes to be their guide. This motley crew journeys to outlandish locales, where they encounter characters such as a director of trailers for films that will never exist; a guerilla force of circus folk; and a tin-pot dictator with a vast fortune built on an empire of excrement.

Crafted by masters of the form, the globally renowned artist Alberto Breccia and award-winning writer Juan Sasturain, this graphic novel spans a period in which the dictatorship committed daily atrocities—as many as an estimated 30,000 citizens "disappeared." *Perramus: The City and Oblivion* is the story of how Argentina's people managed to stop their country from losing its soul.

COVER DESIGN: Jacob Covey

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS